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BY N. C. IRON,
AUTHOR OF "THE DAUGHTER OF LIBERTY," ETC.

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THE DOUBLE HERO;

OR,

THE LIEUTENANT AND THE MAJOR'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE BUILDING OF THE SHIPS.

It was in the early part of the month of July, in the year 1812, that the harbor of Presqu'isle,* since called Erie, and now a fertile and flourishing town in the State of Pennsylvania, was the scene of uncommon bustle and activity. A clamorous din sounded far into the almost impenetrable woods which formed its northern boundary, and to the north the mystic winds were wafted along the undulating surface of Lake Erie until they were heard in awe and wonder by many a passing sail, or died away in the infinity of distance.

Even the ferocity of the wild Indian, who threaded the lovely intricacies of his sylvan birthplace, was subdued at the clang which rung around him—repeated in echo after echo—then melting to a cadence of fairy softness. He conjectured that the enemies of the Great Spirit had assembled to indulge in a fiendish revel on the banks of the lake, and that as each satyr retreated from the gymnasium of his frantic sports, he thus continued the thunder of his awful ecstacies, which, modified in distance, produced those gentler reverberations which inwrapped the sable listener in terrible affright.

But the sturdy traveler in these dreary wastes, unprejudiced by the mystic influences of an imaginative people, would be enticed rather than repelled, by these familiar sounds, for he would recognize the throbs of industry, and as he approached, and the scene became displayed to his view,

* The French, who were the first occupiers of Erie, and who built a fort there, named the place *Presqu'isle*, literally, almost an island; but geographically speaking, a peninsula, which it is.

he might suppose that a numerous colony had chosen this sequestered spot for their settlement, and were now employed in the peaceful occupation of ship-building, in order that they might navigate the lake and seek advantages from distant ports.

But these were no times for such pacific efforts. The sovereignty of a mighty people was disputed, and men who were determined to earn freedom by the only means by which it could be secured were here assembled, and were resolved not to submit to the thrall of a tyrannous domination. The blood of the old Puritan ran in the veins of his not less victorious sons. It was, then, for the purposes of war, and not for those of peace, that these veterans were employed. But it was in defense of their own bright land—to repel aggressive forces—to live or to die on that hallowed soil whither their fathers had fled to erect their altars—a land which they had redeemed from the savage, had tilled, and made to abound in fruitfulness, by their industry, their fortitude, and their unflinching endurance. Such were the men the echoes of whose toil reverberated through the adjacent woods, and glided across the spacious waters of the lake till they reached the ears of a watchful and not distant enemy.

The demeanor of these workmen was unlike that of men laboring for their daily sustenance. The knitted brow, the closed teeth, and the firm and determined aspect of these silent artisans gave evidence that some great object governed their exhaustless efforts. The energy of the mind was seconded by the vigor of the body, and these bold patriots worked on as none could do but those who saw the danger which threatened their dear-bought liberty. The human voice was here but little heard. A monosyllable made known the wants of one and procured the attention of another—all labored in unity—one soul, one mind, one heart, one hand in willingness toiled at two vessels which were near completion, and which were intended to be manned by the very builders of the ships, to meet the British banner on the element where it now floated with imperial pride.

Among these devoted workmen there moved a figure clad in a naval uniform. He was young, of the middle hight, of active habits, and with a most intelligent countenance,

indicative of promptness, firmness and determination, but from his bright eyes could be perceived a degree of impatience that could be detected in no other part of his physiognomy. He was accompanied by a young man of taller stature, whose dress denoted that he also was attached to the same service, to whose opinion he seemed to render much attention, and to whom, in a quick, laconic manner, he frequently referred. The former officer was the afterward celebrated Captain Oliver H. Perry, who had been appointed to the command of the squadron now in preparation. It consisted of the two vessels before named, called the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*, and several sail of smaller craft now sleeping on the waters of the harbor, and which latter had escaped the vigilance of the enemy and slipped into the harbor, under the guidance of the Commodore, from the Niagara river. This chief now moved from place to place, surveying with acuteness all that the dexterity of his compatriots had accomplished, uttering words of cheer, of encouragement, and of approval; but never those of wrath or of reproach—no need of such words there. But this supervision did not wholly engage his attention. Ever and anon he cast an eager and impassioned glance upon the wide waters of the glassy lake. There rode a small but hostile fleet, assiduously watching all that occurred within the harbor, and displaying, in the full effulgence of pride, the banner of an enemy—of an antagonist who had again crossed the vast waters of the Atlantic to dispute the supremacy of a people to the victorious prowess of whose arms it had before succumbed. Each time, however, that the chief looked toward this vigilant foe, an expression of significance passed between him and his companion. He felt that his ships were nearly ready for the contest, and that the zeal and patriotism which had put him in a position to meet the proud flag of his defying rival would not fail him in the hour of deadly strife.

During the severity of the previous winter these men had been occupied in building the two large vessels of the little squadron, ungrudgingly laboring under circumstances of the most difficult nature. The wilderness in which the little village was situated (consisting of not more than three or four dwellings) was the arsenal from which they drew their

timber. To fell, to saw, and then to fashion the stately trees of the forest, was the work of these hardy and determined scions of an indomitable race. But wood was the only article this desert yielded. Food in sparing quantities, and of the humblest description, came from a distance, and all other material indispensable in the construction of this pigmy navy were with difficulty obtained through such a ramification of sources as to render the accomplishment, to our modern notions, a work of utter hopelessness. But these impediments proved but incentives to the greater efforts of these warrior workmen, and despite of all obstructions, they now enjoyed their first triumph in seeing those stately products of their handicraft in readiness to meet the scornful adversary on an element of which she reigned the boasted mistress.

At length the vessels were completed, and what was so lately growing in the woods around, adding to their stateliness and shade, were now converted by the zeal and art of man, into floating citadels for the warriors of the sea; but the harbor of Presqu'isle, though deep and spacious, was inclosed by a formidable bar of sand, over which there did not flow more than seven feet of water. This sea-wall had hitherto served as a defense to the harbor and to those so momentarily engaged within; but the *Lawrence* had now her armaments on board, and no less than fourteen feet of water would float her over this formidable obstruction. This dilemma occasioned some consternation, which was not lessened by the circumstance that the hostile fleet continued in the offing, keeping a shrewd scrutiny upon their opponents, and evidently considering that they had them encaged within the mole.

The Commodore and his friend, however, indomitable and energetic, and impatient also to hasten to the challenge which waved in the distance, determined to lighten the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* of their armaments, and then to float them over the bar with the assistance of very capacious scows. This device, though practicable under ordinary circumstances, seemed prone with danger in the face of an able and vigilant enemy. But the courage and resources of those valiant commanders rose with the adverse circumstances of the hour, and notwithstanding the difficulties to which they were not blind,

they were resolved to redeem this gallant little navy from the tormenting inactivity of a prolonged blockade, and the better to effect this purpose they maintained watchfulness that every movement of the enemy might be known.

One morning—it was on a Friday, a day thought unpropitious to any naval movement in the superstitious mind of an English mariner—the enemy were reported to have suddenly disappeared upon the northern seaboard. Suspicion was attached to a movement so inexpedient, and it was adjudged to be strategic; but the lake was too rough to attempt the passage of the bar, which effort required to be made in smooth water. The next day was passed in unceasing vigil; but the foe was unseen; he still remained absent. The Sabbath dawned—no enemy in view, and most of the officers were enjoying this day of relaxation on shore in the warmth and geniality of an August sun, when, in compliance with a private signal, all repaired on board, and a general order was given to attempt the passage of the bar. In an instant every vessel was in motion. The lighter craft passed over readily, and before night the *Niagara* had joined them; but although all the armament had been taken from the *Lawrence*, and the scows had raised her three feet, it was found impossible to float her off the bar. No alternative remained but to lighten her of her stores, and in this and other preparations was the night consumed.

The following morning, to the consternation of the fleet, the topmasts of the foe were discerned in the distance. The unhaunted Commodore, however, had passed the Rubicon. His vessels were all outside the harbor but the *Lawrence*, which he had selected for the flag-ship, and he now urged those in charge of her to increased efforts, while he formed his little squadron and prepared for action. In a few hours the *Lawrence* was crossing the bar; but at this juncture the enemy became aware of the advantages which he had lost by his absence. He seemed to regard the fearless Commodore with astonishment. A distant and harmless cannonade ensued to prevent the enemy from running in, during which the *Lawrence* crossed the bar, and her guns were whipped in and manned as each was put on board. The enemy, in sogged silence, grimly viewed the little fleet for half an hour.

then, with a press of canvas, soon disappeared up the lake. Thus did the English Commodore, in a moment of inadvertence, lose the prey which he had been so sedulously watching, and which he thought he had so cunningly netted. He was allured from the post of duty by an incident which would seem more like the refined artifice of an enemy, than the attachment and devotion of a friend. The orthodox inhabitants of an opposite town in Canada, anxious to display their loyalty to their island sovereign in their appreciation of Commodore Barclay as a hero of Trafalgar, had invited him to a public dinner. The ruling passion of the English for "dining out," united possibly to the execrable egotism of the brave Commodore, were temptations too powerful even for the discipline of the navy. In this feeling of weakness he sailed for the fatal port, and thus unconsciously and unwittingly commenced the preliminary arrangements for becoming a prisoner to the indomitable courage of his vigorous rival.

It was impossible for the Commodore to follow the retreating foe in the present state of his squadron; and, although he viewed this hasty departure with regret, he resolved to be better prepared for an encounter when they next faced each other.

Another cause of anxiety existed—there was an insufficiency of men. The brigs had little more than half their complement of hands, and of these but a small proportion were seamen capable of working the vessels skillfully. It was evident that this want must be supplied to render the vessels efficient that had been constructed and fitted by the unconquerable hearts who manned them. They were surrounded by untenanted wilds, whence not a recruit could be drawn. In this perplexity the Commodore determined to sail to the other end of the lake toward Detroit, and as General Harrison was lying with his army in the confines of Michigan, the most ready method to increase his force, through a somewhat novel one, appeared to be to dispatch an ambassador to the General, in the person of his naval friend, explaining his position, his determination to fight at all hazards before the approaching winter, and to request permission to allow frontiersmen and soldiers under his command to volunteer for the coming engagement. If this were accorded, he had

little doubt of the result; and much as he regretted parting with his young and attached friend, he felt that none but an ardent and confidential advocate could so fully and forcibly represent that the success of the inevitable naval contest was one of great national importance, and worthy of the boon now craved of the gallant General.

CHAPTER II.

THE EMBASSY FOR RECRUITS.

On the morning of the sailing of the squadron, just as the sun, as if unclenching the crystal gates of his gorgeous palace, had emitted the first ruby blush, the Commodore and his friend, Lieutenant Howard, stood in profound conversation on the quarter-deck of the *Lacrosse*.

The Lieutenant was in stature above the middle height, with a manly and intelligent countenance. He was the only son of an old military officer, who had served with distinction in the war of Independence. At the restoration of peace he had married, and now resided at Washington. His son had exhibited a propension for the navy, for which he had been educated; and, although he was not yet known to fame, he displayed such remarkable promptness of character and aptitude in naval tactics as often forebodes a career of renown. On the occasion of Captain Perry taking a command on the lakes, Lieutenant Howard had solicited to be attached to him without any immediate commission, which had been acceded to by the authorities, and thus was the Lieutenant here to act in any useful and efficient capacity that circumstances might require. He now stood beside the Commodore receiving his instructions, and appointing to join him as soon as possible in one of the harbors of that delightful portion of these waters which may be truly called the archipelago of Lake Erie.

On the main-deck of the vessel stood a powerful man, clad in a green hunting shirt, resting upon his rifle, in an attitude

of ease well calculated to display his vigorous frame. This was a frontiersman named Duncan, whose experience and qualifications as a hunter and a guide were unrivalled. He was well taught in the habits of the various Indian tribes, and of their degree of favor or of hostile feeling toward the Americans; he knew, too, their inexhaustible craving for the lives of white enemies, that they might receive the horrible bounty which was often awarded on the production of a Christian scalp. The Commodore had selected this lover of the woods to be the companion of Lieutenant Howard, for he knew him to be faithful, indefatigable, and to possess all the indispensable accomplishments needed in traversing the pathless wilds of their long and dreary journey.

The increasing effulgence of the sun intimated to these officers that it was time to separate. Together they descended to the main-deck, where they cordially greeted the hunter. A few minutes were occupied in conversation, when the ambassador and his *attaché* bade adieu to the Commodore, and left the vessel for the shore. The Lieutenant had cast off his naval costume, and had adopted a dress similar to that of the guide; within the loose hunting-shirt which he wore, was a belt in which was inserted a pair of handsome pistols. He also carried a rifle, with a powder-belt over his shoulders. Thus accoutered and accredited, this portentous embassy wended its way toward the lofty pines which fringed the woods. Before, however, they passed within the recesses of the forest, they simultaneously directed one last look to the gallant fleet which contained so many friends. All was animation; some were occupied at the capstan weighing the anchors, and others were aloft unfurling the sails, and every thing indicated that in a few minutes the ships would be far from the spot which was hallowed as being what may be termed the birthplace of the larger and many of the smaller fabrics.

With this parting view, the guide moved onward, followed at a short distance by the Lieutenant. They plunged into the mazy forest, and in its awful solitude wended their lonely way. Well skilled in the science of woodcraft, the frontiersman proceeded in silence and in confidence, while the deep impression made upon the Lieutenant by the profound

quietness which prevailed around, fitted his mind to muse on the circumstances of the past, and to compute, with feelings of youthful hope, the ethereal radiance of the future.

The first day's journey terminated without any adventure, and, from the absence of all recent trail, Duncan augured favorably for the expedition; but he well knew that danger might arise from the many prowling Indians attached to the British interests who were employed as spies and to intercept dispatches. Still he hoped to avoid these, or, if that were impossible, to overpower them, as they usually traveled in small parties.

At early dawn on the second day, they rose from their leafy bed, and, after a slight repast, proceeded in unbroken silence toward a favorite resting-place of the hunter, which they reached about an hour after midday. This rapid and lengthy march had fatigued the Lieutenant, although the hardy sinews of his companion seemed wholly undisturbed. The delightful retreat, however, which they had now reached fully repaid them for their exertion. It was one of those charming glades which so frequently occur in the depths of American forests, and was inwrapped in lofty pines, whose waving branches and nodding crests, as they caught the gentle zephyr which moved along the opening, seemed to welcome the weary travelers to this sequestered shade of natural loveliness. A gentle slope led toward the opposite side, where the descent became suddenly more precipitous, which contributed beauty to a crystal stream that gurgled in silvery purling at the bottom of the ravine. This current fed a considerable and almost circular basin, which was so pure that the smallest object could be discerned through its pellucid waters, as though one gazed in air; and here were reflected the noble trees, still bowing their salams of gladness at the admiration of those around. No more lovely retreat could have sheltered Diana and her nymphs.

The hunter led the way down the ravine, and both crossed the rivulet, for on that side the trees graced the very margin of the waters. The Lieutenant placed himself upon a mossy bank beneath a spreading tree, in the full enjoyment of this lovely shelter.

The hunter, however, who, with the acuteness common to

his craft, had been scrutinizing the locality, now aroused his companion from his reflection, by calling his attention to the still smoking embers of a fire.

The Lieutenant leaped up in dismay, exclaiming: "A camp-fire, Duncan; there must be danger near us."

"Indians have been here," replied the hunter, "and here, no doubt, they passed the night; but they must have left about daybreak. I will examine their trail."

The hunter disappeared up the mound which formed the southern boundary of the glade selected as their resting-place. In a quarter of an hour the hunter was seen coming down the hill; but, without noticing the Lieutenant, he strode across the open space into the wood beyond. It was near an hour before he reappeared, during which period the Lieutenant had remained in a state of considerable excitement and agitation. He now reported that he felt confirmed in his original conjecture, that a party of Indians had passed the night on the spot where they now stood, and that he judged their number to be about eight. They had crossed the glen, and he had followed their trail for some distance into the woods, and had ascertained that the path which the Indians had taken was in nearly a parallel direction to that by which they themselves had arrived at the glen. He, moreover, had no doubt that the Indians were hostile and in their war-paint.

The hunter did not consider that there was any imminent danger, and the Lieutenant being fatigued, they concluded to partake of such provisions as they had with them, and afterward retire for the night to a log hut which the hunter described as being situated about a quarter of a mile from the glen. Here they anticipated shelter and comparative security, and in talking over these arrangements, in discussing their frugal banquet, and in enjoying the delightful coolness and tranquillity of the spot, they reluctantly became aware that it was necessary for them to depart. They languidly arose from a reclining to a sitting posture, regarding the almost fruitless attempt of the weakened rays of the receding sun to penetrate the umbrageous foliage of the trees, when a livid flash from the opposite wood, the sharp crack of a rifle, and the instant falling of the hunter's cap from his head, caused the utmost astonishment to the travelers. The fall of the

peril was at once comprehended by the wary hunter. Almost simultaneously with the fall of his cap, he forced down the Lieutenant to a horizontal position on the earth, and at that moment the sound of a second rifle was heard, and a well-aimed but defeated ball passed harmlessly over the visage of the outstretched officer.

"Roll over till you reach the shelter of the trees—don't rise. Take your arms and your rifle with you," said the hunter. "The Indians are upon us, and we must make every effort to gain the hut."

The Lieutenant, who, at first, seemed inclined to resent the roughness of his companion, soon felt that his life had been preserved by the promptness of this act of magnanimity, and now followed explicitly the directions of this experienced guide; but they did not reach the trees until several shots had assailed them in their novel progression, but fortunately, from the brokenness of the ground, no casualty occurred.

The cover gained, each arose behind a tree, whence they had a distinct view of the open glade and of the trees beyond. All was hushed in quietness. The echoes of the deadly rifle had died away, and peace seemed again to hold dominion where so much beauty reigned. But those very features which adorned the scene—the stately trees—concealed in their lavish graces the remorseless and sanguinary Indian, now athirst for the life-blood of humanity. The hunter, to tempt their hostile rifles, affected to expose himself rather carelessly; but nothing would entice them to discharge another shot. Contrary to their crafty policy, they had already fired too soon, and missed their quarry.

"What can have become of those wretches, Duncan? all seems still," inquired the Lieutenant, who was sheltered by the huge trunk of a tree in close proximity to that occupied by the hunter.

"We must continue our retreat to the hut," replied the hunter. "They may be going round the glade to take us in the rear, or to prevent our reaching the hut; but this must not be. Follow me, for our lives now depend upon our swiftness."

After giving utterance to this exhortation, the hunter ascended the mound, loping along with the most prodigious

strides, and the Lieutenant followed. Without encountering any impediment, they reached the foot of a hill about one hundred feet in height, at the summit of which stood the object of their exertions—the log hut. The base of the hill was large, the apex small, and the ascent steep, and, with the exception of some bushes of underwood, had nothing on it but short grass. Consequently, upon emerging from the cover afforded by the wood, the retreating party would be exposed to the assault of any enemy that might be advancing upon them; before, therefore, they quitted the concealment of the forest, the hunter paused for a moment, as well to give his companion an opportunity to breathe, as to admonish him again of the importance of the hut to their safety.

“Now, sir, up this hill as fast as possible. Our lives are in a foot’s length.”

The hunter sprung forward, and both mounted the hill at a speed impracticable to those who were not running for their lives. The event proved with what accuracy the hunter had reckoned, for the instant they had entered the coveted citadel of defense two balls struck the frame-work of the door-way.

“We will put up the door,” coolly observed the hunter, “for we shall soon have these devils upon us. They know our number, but I don’t think they exceed eight. Keep a good look-out, Captain, through the loop-holes.”

During these occurrences the sun had set, and the obscurity of the night rendered it difficult to descry any object. The hunter, having secured the door to his satisfaction by various contrivances, now instituted a careful reconnoissance from each side of the hut. No Indian was visible, and every thing seemed lulled in the deep repose of night; but it was evident that this aspect was deceptive, and that the Indians had retired beneath the gloom of the forest to consult upon the means of accomplishing their nefarious designs. It was indispensable, therefore, to maintain a watchfulness on all sides. They were besieged by an artful enemy, and it was impossible to conjecture by what means he would assail them. The early part of the night passed without molestation, and consequently afforded much time to the companions to prepare for the coming struggle. At length, the Lieutenant inquired:

"Do you imagine that these Indians are the same who passed last night beside the fire at that delightful spot from which we have been driven?"

"I have no doubt of it," responded the hunter. "They must have struck our trail in crossing the woods, and followed it in the hope of gaining our scalps, in which benevolent artifice they had nearly succeeded. I can not think why they did not get to our rear before they fired. I have some doubt of the sagacity of their leader, and yet the movement round here to the hut was well planned, and proves that they know more of the locality than I thought they did."

At this period, the attention of the hunter, who had not relaxed in his espial, was attracted to two black substances lying near the bottom of the hill, at twenty or thirty yards distance from each other. He communicated this to the Lieutenant in as few words as possible; but he could perceive nothing. The profound darkness, however, seemed rather to expand than to contract the vision of the hunter, for he soon announced that the dark masses were moving toward the hut, and that they were Indians advancing on their infernal errand. The approaching enemies were as dark as the night, and were not discernible to the eye of the Lieutenant; but the hunter, muttering that he should be compelled to lessen their number, placed his rifle at one of the loop-holes, a flash and a report ensued, and the body of an Indian was seen for an instant in the air, and then a hideous yell escaped from his associates, proclaiming that the unerring aim of the skillful hunter had deprived these miscreants of one of their fellows.

This occurrence suspended hostilities. The dead body of the Indian had rolled down the hill beneath the shade of the trees, whither the rest of the party were concealed to form other expedients in their assault, for the deep feeling of revenge was now added to that of the inherent love of blood.

CHAPTER III.

INVOLUNTARY DEMONS.

THE moon appeared above the horizon, and was placidly shedding its silvery rays upon the scene; but the base of the hill was still involved in obscurity.

The hunter, who had maintained a most infatigable espionage, now remarked:

"There will be peace for another four hours, till the moon is gone down. Darkness suits their schemes."

"Had we not better sally forth?" said the Lieutenant. "It must be perceptible to these shrewd warriors that the mere want of water will prevent us from holding out for any length of time, and that they need but a little patience to subdue us, were we to remain here."

"That is exactly what they have not got in war," said the hunter; "besides, they may be under apprehensions as well as ourselves. They may be fearful that some stronger party may strike their trail as they have ours, and thus place them between two enemies. No, no. They will be at some trick as soon as the darkness favors them; but should we unclose this door, and step into the light of the moon, the ride of every Indian would be pointed at us. There is, however, another means of escape, and we must use the little time that we now have to ascertain if it be still practicable. Five years ago, I and a friend hunted for a long time in this district, during which we always made this hut our headquarters. Some days were so unfavorable for our occupation that we remained at home, and it was during these periods of idleness that we conceived the notion of making our retreat more secure against the various parties of Indians who were often abroad, and whose love for scalps made them forever thirsting for honest men's blood. We determined to excavate a passage to the bottom of the hill on which stands this hut, and which, by great labor, we accomplished. We engaged never to reveal the secret but in extremity, and I think that point is arrived at now. Let us employ the little time we

have in examining the passage, for I believe that it is our only road to life."

The hunter then took from the interior of the roof of the hut an old spade, which had been concealed there, and commenced removing the earth from the center of the floor. At the depth of two feet from the surface he uncovered some cross-pieces of timber, upon displacing which, appeared a circular aperture of about three feet in diameter, and this he announced to be the mouth of the cave. This entrance was formed by a perpendicular shaft, of the depth of five feet, which had been well timbered with the stems of young pines. Into this the hunter leaped, and, alighting at the bottom, proceeded along the gallery which led to the base of the mound. A few minutes, however, had only elapsed, when he returned in evident perplexity, and stated that a large portion of the earth had given way, and that he was apprehensive that they should not be able to avail themselves of this desirable means of exit. A light was soon procured, and both descended to examine the nature of the impediment. This adit commenced at the bottom of the shaft, and was about three feet in height, and two feet in width, and was sloped to an angle of about fifty-five degrees. The roof had been roughly secured by timber, and occasionally, where the earth was loose, the sides were supported also. Down this declivity they moved until they encountered the impeding earth. The hunter began a minute examination, and discovered that a spring of water had broken through the roof, displaced and destroyed the timbers, and caused the severe damage which they now had so much cause to lament.

"We must remove the earth," said the hunter; "let us not waste a moment."

In the fullness of their strength, both went to work, as if in re-temptation of a frightful doom. The obstruction was indeed a formidable one, and for some time excited the apprehensions of these silent laborers. Their implements were of the humblest kind, and while one, with an almost worthless shovel, hurled down the earth, the other distributed it in various parts, with no other instrument than a piece of wood. For three hours did they labor, in this contracted gallery, with unceasing toil, when all at once a cry of joy escaped

from the hunter, as his spade now passed freely along the roof of the excavation. But he had no sooner given utterance to the welcome intelligence, than a report like the pealing of thunder broke upon their ears. The first thought that arose to the mind of the Lieutenant was that the mouth of their subterranean tenement had closed upon them, and that they had found a sepulcher in their search for life alive; but the perceptions of the hunter were truer in arriving at the immediate cause of alarm. He at once exclaimed:

"They are forcing the door of the hut—run! run!"

The Lieutenant, who was holding a piece of burning pine in his hand, at this incentive turned and rushed up the passage, followed by the intrepid hunter. They reached the shaft, and a slight effort enabled them to mount it; but, simultaneously with this action, another terrific blow was dealt upon the door, which could no longer resist the assault; the cross-pieces gave way with a frightful crash, and the door flew open, disclosing the still more appalling spectacle of the Indians bearing a tree horizontally, which they had used as a battering-ram, and thus forced the door and gained entrance to the hut.

At this critical period, the Lieutenant arose from the shaft in the center of the floor, and the extinguished brand, which he still held in his hand, being fanned into life by the sudden breeze from the open door, produced a light which now shed a lurid gleam over the whole scene. This fearful appearance—the rising from the bowels of the earth of something they could not recognize as human, followed by a figure of colossal stature, together with what the Indians might magnify into the fire that is thought usually to attend the domestic visits of the accursed to earth—overpowered their faculties. With a frantic yell of horror, they allowed their formidable engine to fall to the ground, and, abandoning the advantages they had gained by their own skill and the laxity of their adversaries, they rushed down the hill to the security of the woods below. At the time that the Lieutenant first rose from the shaft, he was about to rush upon the Indians, and use his pistols, which he still retained; but the penetration of the ever alert and watchful hunter detected the effect of this unstudied scene upon the enemy. He saw that the

Indians were transfixed with awe at their supernatural visitation, and he imperceptibly prevented his companion from destroying the happy effect of this infatuating illusion.

This episodic occurrence, equally amazing to both parties, had routed the enemy at a time when individual prowess might have failed, and, for the moment, a bloodless victory was attained; but the cautious hunter did not place more confidence in this ideal panic than was justified by his profound knowledge of the capricious nature of the foe. The Indians had scarcely reached the bottom of the hill when he drew the battering-ram within the hut, and, closing the door, again made it fast with the weapon supplied by the timidity of the enemy. The hunter then sat down upon the tree, which he had placed obliquely against the door.

"We ought to be thankful for our preservation," said he, "for we have escaped from a dreadful fate. Had those imps gained possession of the hut, they would soon have comprehended the intention of our works, and might have buried us alive. Even now, upon reflection, for they are thinking creatures, they may suspect our object. Yet, they will think it impossible, as it would be, were not the work already done. We must not, however, neglect working toward the outlet. The obstruction once removed, we shall be able to get out, as I felt the fresh air entering at the other end just as that terrible report rolled down the shaft. I will remain here on guard if you again descend and remove the earth that still holds us prisoners. Be not particular about the size of the hole; we can crawl along that portion. Time is life—Blood now, for these devils may return as soon as they have had time to blush at their own folly."

The Lieutenant readily acquiesced, and proceeded to his gloomy duties. The hunter now took a survey of the state of things without. It was midnight. The moon had sunk below the horizon, and the space on the hill between the hut and the forest's edge was veiled in such darkness as could only be penetrated by the lynx-eyes of an experienced woodman. Notwithstanding the manner in which he had fortified the door, he felt assured that, as all the principal fastenings had been burst asunder, the beam which was now its main support could not resist much force, and his enemies well

knew how circumscribed were his means of defense. The ascent to the hut was severe, and from this height the eye could sweep the hill on all sides; but on one side was a water-course, or gorge, about three feet in depth. This gorge was narrow at the top, but was wide enough to admit the body of a man in the center. Into this it was impossible to see, so that here was a mask for the stratagems of the one, and the boundary of the vision of the other. This trench was not probably perceived by the Indians on their first advance; but the loss of one of their number led to a stricter examination for the better means of approach. It was painfully evident to the hunter that his wily adversary had thus the advantage of a walk beneath the very walls of his little fortress without his power to prevent it.

For an hour he paced from side to side—like the noble lion, he seemed uneasy in his den—his ear, his eye, his every sense distended. He examined the door again and again—he removed and replaced the plugs where it had been placed for rifles; he felt like one who, knowing his own prowess, could not but think that he had a difficult enemy to cope with, in numbers, in wile, and in unscrupulousness. Hardly a soft sound—a stealthy movement is heard; like the sensitive stag, the hunter projects his head to dissect the undulation of the air; but, unlike that noble animal, he flies not—he starts—he advances to the challenge—he rushes up the side of the cabin, and places his ear against the roof; but, as he is trying to absorb the sound, the Lieutenant appears from the depths of earth with the exciting and welcome intelligence that the passage to the outer entrance is complete. Still the noise occupies the attention of the hunter. It might have been the progressive motion of the Lieutenant, as he ascended from his toilsome vigil, that saluted his ear, and he might only have heard the whisper of the echo from above. It was not repeated, and he descended to his companion, with whom he conversed in a low voice, and they both agreed that although the passage was now free, they would still attempt to defend the hut, and preserve the secret of the cave. They were sitting in deep silence, when both were suddenly started by a distinct, though slight movement above them.

“One of them is on the roof,” uttered the hunter, in haste;

"should he see this shaft, the next object of these wretches would be to search for the outlet, and that they would soon detect—they only want the cue. The roof is thick, but he is attempting to penetrate it. He must die ere he looks in."

He immediately ascended to the spot whence he had before come down, and there he evidently perceived a slight scratching, as if an attempt was being made to remove sufficient of the covering of the roof to see inside the hut. He had no alternative of action—he must be prompt and decided. He motioned to the Lieutenant to hand up his rifle, and he then placed the end of the barrel in the direction of the noise. This he continued to advance each time the scratching was renewed, which was at intervals of about a minute, until nearly half the barrel became invisible in the thickness of the roof. This was the dreadful moment. The scratcher encountered a hard substance; with one hand he endeavored to remove it; he could not succeed, and he quietly brought the other to his assistance; this effort placed the body of the savage just over the obstruction. The hunter saw nothing, but his instinct was unerring. He touched the fatal trigger of his rifle—there was a smothered moan, and a heavy body was heard to roll down the roof, and to fall beside the dwelling—and the secret of the cabin was preserved.

"I did not want his life," said the hunter, as he again alighted on the floor of the cabin: "I did not want his life; but we must provide for our own security. Two have now paid the penalty of their contrivances; but this will only whet the revengeful appetites of the survivors. In two hours we shall have daylight, and before that I suppose we shall be again attacked."

"I do not like, my friend I mean," said the Lieutenant, "to interfere with your mode of defense, for you meet every contingency of our dangerous position with such promptness and vigor as to command my admiration. But, here we are, confined to a fortress of one room, and that becoming untenable, without other garrison than ourselves, and with little or no food. We are even assailed from the roof of our woful refuge, from which it is not impossible that a rifle may be pointed at our heads at this moment, for the darkness is not impenetrable to the eyes of these murderous prowlers of the

forest. Would it not be well to make good our retreat by the secret passage beneath the very feet of our enemies, while they are cunningly planning other schemes for our destruction?"

"Your advice is sound, sir," replied the hunter; "but I would rather await their next device. If we could hold out till day-break, I think they would abandon us altogether."

"I am most anxious to proceed on my mission," said the Lieutenant. "I thought that our escape could be better effected under the privacy of the night. I am quite willing, however, to yield to your judgment."

CHAPTER IV.

THE DANCE OF DEATH.

THEY again examined the door, the roof, the sides, and even the earthy bottom of the hut, and the hunter was especially minute in his scrutiny of that part nearest the gully; but no attempts to undermine were apparent. They then peered into the gloom; but all was soundless, save the whisper of the gentle breeze which still fanned the crevices of the trees of the forest. Thus did they look and listen, till another and more alarming sound caught the ear of the hunter. At first there was a slight crackling, which became louder, and then there was a suffocating sensation felt within the hut. The hunter exclaimed:

"They have fired the hut, and, unless we retreat, we shall perish in the flames. Follow; follow!"

At this the hunter leaped into the shaft, accompanied by the Lieutenant. They moved along as fast as the difficult passage would allow, and when they arrived at the narrow part, where they were compelled to throw themselves down and work their way like serpents, they cast a look behind, and there they saw a few burning embers rolling after them. They had fallen from the roof into the shaft, and proved that neither the hunter nor the Lieutenant had quitted the

tenement too early for their preservation. This contraction overcome, they again passed quickly on, until they arrived near to the place of exit. Here the orifice was reduced to the smallest possible capacity to admit the body of a man. The hunter, however, by dint of great exertion, worked himself sufficiently through to project his head and shoulders into the bushes which screened the aperture from view. He soon found that the glare of the fire, which had now communicated to the frame of the building, illumined the entire hill, so as to render the difficulty of escaping the observation of such a subtle enemy very considerable. To recede was impossible, and as the bushes and underwood were closely entwined in this chosen spot, he withdrew himself wholly from this subterraneous passage, and called on the Lieutenant to do the same. This he did, and there they both sat, hidden in the foliage of the underwood, to recruit themselves for a farther effort when opportunity should offer. The flames of the hut mounted high into the air, and around them stood the exulting Indians, yelling in unearthly wildness. It was the ghastly revel of these malignant fiends, over what they thought was the funeral pile of their vanquished enemies. They ran, and leaped, and threw up their arms in unnatural delight, and every manifestation of barbarous triumph and rapture was witnessed by the two companions, who sat unheeded in the bush, quietly beholding the ceremony of their own immolation.

The hunter was much amused at the joyous feats of the Indians, saying:

"Let them exult in their dance of death; but when they search for the ashes of their victims, to dishonor them, then will they find the hole in the earth whence the shadows arose before them. If they prosecute their search a little farther, which in all probability they will do, they may be led to the opening from which we have just emerged; and also to this little copse, where the living sacrifice sat to witness their sacracious antics over—the old wood hut!"

The Lieutenant laughed heartily at the conceit of the hunter, notwithstanding the precariousness of their position, and almost wished that he could be present when the full conviction of the deceit that had been practiced became revealed to the Indians.

"If their dismay," said the Lieutenant, "at the discovery, at all approaches the gladness and exhilaration now displayed, the exhibition will indeed be scenic."

They were, however, in too perilous a situation to indulge in much amusement of this description. The underwood where they were concealed was twenty yards from the verge of the wood into which they were desirous of escaping. To render this difficult, and even impossible, without detection, the entire interval was rendered as light as noonday by the flames. Daybreak was approaching, and unless some incident occurred to favor their deliverance before that took place, they would be at the mercy of the Indians. The hunter was revolving these matters in his mind, and assiduously watching every chance that might assist them, when one side of the hut suddenly fell, smothering for a few seconds the greater portion of the flame, and involving in shadow the lower part of the hill. Without the delay of an instant, the hunter and the Lieutenant issued from their retirement, and, in a stooping posture rushed down to the wood. They gained it; but another yell made them fear they were perceived. In haste each sought the shelter of a tree, and then cautiously looked toward their enemies. There they stood, in dark relief, before the burning pile, the flames having resumed their wonted brightness, and it was this circumstance which caused that fearful howl.

The hunter now took the lead at a rapid pace. They ascended the opposite declivity, but, before plunging into the deeper shades of the forest, turned to gaze on the burning hut. Nearly all the logs had fallen, and the fire was relaxing in its intensity. The voices had ceased, and the frantic crew seemed disposed to inquire into the effect of their atrocious fury. Their forms were still visible; but they had assumed a recumbent position, as if resting from their marauding frolics. Yet none left the spot, but guarded the languishing flames as sedulously as when in the extreme of their heathenish orgies.

The companions, however, soon turned from the contemplation of these creatures of passion, the hunter remarking:

"Those flames will act as a beacon for many miles, and it is impossible to conjecture what may be the consequence. A few miles forward there is a cave in a rock, where we can

ake the rest required in great security; and should those men follow on our trail, they will not detect our hiding-place."

After nearly an hour's swift walking, they arrived within a short distance of the promised shelter. The hunter now became additionally cautious to destroy their trail, as he regarded the place of concealment which they were approaching with great veneration. It was so peculiarly situated, and possessed so many advantages in positions of danger—was so apparently unhid den, yet was so secret—that he was jealously solicitous to guard it from detection. Both, therefore, dispossessed themselves of their boots, and walked a considerable way on the trunks of the trees lying around, leaping from one to the other, when too far distant to step, by means of a pole, the hunter assiduously erasing every trace of their laborious progress. In this manner they advanced until they reached a lolly hill formed of limestone, immense fragments of which were strewn about the foreground, where, in all probability, they had been hurled by some convulsion of nature. The same spasmodic effort had cleft the hill in two, leaving a chasm of about three feet wide, which formed a deep and frightful interval.

"There," said the hunter, "is our sanctuary."

The Lieutenant perceived nothing but ruggedness around. Instead of an asylum of safety it seemed to him a spot of far more exposure than the woods which they had quitted with so much care. But the hunter led the way into the rent in the hill, and, with the assistance of his hunting-knife and the butt-end of his rifle, he removed a rough stone from the side, and disclosed a cave sufficiently large to contain three or four persons. Into this den he invited the Lieutenant, who had been regarding the ingenious contrivance with astonishment and admiration. He unhesitatingly embraced the refuge and quiet afforded by a cell so secluded. His companion, after carefully obliterating every remains of a trail, passed in also, and closed the magic outlet with the same studious attention to perfect secretiveness. The cave was by no means dark, as the light of the morning was admitted through two crevices in the face of the hill, commanding a view, for some distance, of the path which they had so lately trodden.

Looks of surprise still beamed in the Lieutenant's countenance, which did not escape the observing watchfulness of the hunter. He therefore explained to him how he had while hunting, accidentally discovered this den, and how by a little contrivance of his own he had made it so secure. Many of the trees which they had crossed he had felled for the purpose of obscuring the trail, and he did not think that it was possible to detect their place of refuge. "Once," he continued, "I remained in the recesses of this rock two days and nights with only a flask of water and two or three biscuits. I was too closely followed by a dozen Indians to escape otherwise, and although they saw me enter the cleft, they could not discover me. But I could see them from these chinks, and gained many of their plans from their own mouths."

The Lieutenant partook of the confidence of his companion, and not many minutes had elapsed before they were both in deep slumber. Sleep was needful to these bold and hardy travelers of the inhospitable wilderness, for the vigilance they had exercised and the fatigue they had undergone had prostrated their physical and their mental strength. It was after midday when the Lieutenant awoke, and then he perceived that the hunter was busily occupied peering through the crevices of their lair. He informed the Lieutenant that the Indians had been there some time, having followed their trail to the place where they had taken so much care to conceal their further progress—there they were at first, and for two hours had been wandering around the cave where they were now so securely hidden. Twice he had seen them enter the cleft, but their scrutinizing eyes detected nothing, and they returned in rage and disappointment. They were Canadian Indians, and from what he could gather from their conversation, they were the spies of the fleet, and were on their way to a rendezvous on the banks of the lake. He also learned from the excited manner in which they spoke, and from their violent gesticulations, that these human vultures were bitterly tortured on ascertaining that the ashes of their enemies were unmingled with those of the withered lot, nor was the keenness of their hatred more changed by their subsequent discovery of the myth of the ghostly visitation and the reality of subterranean flight.

In consequence of the proximity of these fierce avengers, it was not thought prudent to continue their journey until the darkness of night might favor their departure. The hunter also advised that they should bend their course farther from the lake, in the direction of what he termed Major Hewson's grant, where they would obtain comfortable entertainment at the Major's house. "It is rather more circuitous, but it is a safer road," he continued, "and one by which we shall not be apt to encounter these dark rogues. Not that these little affairs matter, but the time is precious, and the Commodore will be impatient to hear of us."

"You are right, Duncan," said the Lieutenant; "these delays will be ruinous to our object. Let us by all means take the safer path, as that will be the most speedy. The danger here is nothing; but the success of our mission may involve the future guidance of this rueful war. But who is Major Hewson? Surely it can not be the officer who distinguished himself at the close of the last war?"

"It is no doubt the same," said the hunter, "and we are not more than a long day's march from his grant. His house is open to all nations and all colors, and his hospitality is alike to white and black. He is the monarch of the bush, and during a residence of twenty years, has maintained a character of honor among all comers and goers."

In this species of conversation they awaited nightfall, when they quitted their retreat in the same cautious manner in which they had entered it. The hunter closed the orifice, expunged the footprints from the rugged bottom of the cleft, and used other precautions only thought useful by those notable denizens of the forest. This done, they proceeded on their journey until past midnight, without hearing other sounds than those common to the woods, when they rested until day. But just as the golden rays of the sun forced their bright light through the eastern canopy of the heavens, the hunter and the Lieutenant were ready for the march. They arose from their earthy resting-place, and with refreshed bodies and more easy minds, they strode toward the shelter of Major Hewson's roof, and at the close of day arrived at the boundary of his grant.

The Lieutenant knew something more of this worthy family

than he had confessed to his guide. In the course of the previous winter, while in New York, he had become greatly enamored with Miss Hewson, a younger daughter of the Major, who was a lovely and accomplished young lady. From her he had learned that she was a genial plant of the wilderness, and that in compliance with her mother's desire, she periodically visited that metropolis, and generally remained with her relations several months. She always looked forward, however, to a return to those scenes of her youth as a mariner views his homeward voyage from a distant land. She was a forest flower, with all the attractions of attentive culture. The Lieutenant delighted to hear her describe the rugged heights, the deep and romantic hollows, the mystic caves, and the fairy echoes which were included within the circuit of her walks and rides. The sunny glades and the profound recesses of the noble forest were equally dear to her gentle heart, and sweet to her memory. A mutual attachment took place. It remained undeclared, but was demonstrated by those allegorical evidences in love which can not be misunderstood. In the midst of this revel of the heart, the Lieutenant was summoned to his naval duties, and they separated with that impressioned conviction of mutual affection which, in refined and congenial hearts, supplants the use of words. Since that divine hour, the Lieutenant had never faltered in his devotion. Through every difficult and trying scene, this lovely girl was the hope of his deliverance. He now stood so near to her dear home, that the feelings of reverence began to displace those of ecstasy as he approached those scenes of happiness and joy that had been so often and so graphically pictured to his enraptured senses.

Lieutenant Howard was awakened from this poetical reverie of thought by the sound of rushing waters. He had reached the edge of the forest, and was upon the summit of a lofty precipice, whence he looked upon a valley of such rural elegance, as struck him with amazement. The noise which had first aroused him proceeded from the hoarse voice of a cataract—one of those contrivances of nature so awed in appearance, so sublime in effect, and yet so simple in construction. The water descended from a great height, striking in its fall on projecting rocks, and scattering its spray in rain

of frost-like filaments, so metaphorical of a silver shower; but the main volume rushed on in mighty leaps, and dashing in hideous roars to the level of the deep ravine, there gave its last dire howl, then moved on in foam and anger, till, sobering in its ire, its rapid current divided into many streams, and went on its various courses to fertilize the earth.

Here nature was untouched: as in the somber forest, she still dwelt in her primitive beauty, wildness and magnificence. But beyond this point, how altered was the face of all things; yet this change was not uncongenial to the hearts of our travelers. The civilizer had asserted his right to supplant the barbarian, and for a considerable distance the land had been cleared, the plow had been at work, and from a dense and pathless forest the magic of man's toil had produced a rich and fruitful land, studded with wheat and corn, and dwellings of comfort.

CHAPTER V.

JEALOUSY IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE glorious sun of an August day was just setting, and its rays were kissing the tops of the lofty trees in farewell for the night, as the Lieutenant gazed upon this peaceful scene of industry and art. It had burst upon his view like an oasis to the traveler of the desert. It seemed only a step from the wildest scene of nature to the cultivated haunts of his fellow-men. At the foot of the precipice on which he stood, which formed one side of a deep ravine, through which flowed in haste and turmoil the waters of the cascade, was a well-cleared grassy plain of considerable extent, dotted picturesquely with trees of great stature, which added to the embellishment of this park-like space. Beyond this, and sufficiently surrounded by pines to break the rough wind of winter, still judiciously left at sufficient distance to afford ample room for gardens, was a really noble and tastefully constructed residence, and all the more characteristic of its situation for being of wood. This was sacred to him as the birthplace and home

of the fair girl of his heart. In clearing this spacious pasturage, a lengthy avenue of beeches had been tastefully allowed to remain, which now formed an imposing approach from the road which led to the other houses of the settlement. A log hut had also been erected at the end of the avenue, where a gate was placed, which was attended to by the occupant of the cabin, a poor old Indian woman, who had been abandoned by her tribe in the woods, and had since remained with the Major's family, to which she was much attached. In the distance were many farm-houses of substantial appearance, and the Lieutenant gazed upon these prosperous habitations with wonder and enthusiasm. He had emerged so suddenly from the somber dignity and entangled meshes of the forest, to the open lands and rich cornfields of civilization, that he seemed standing on the verge of the regions of enchantment.

Major Hewson had been a distinguished officer in a dragon regiment in the Revolutionary army, and when the independence of the United States was acknowledged in 1783, he had retired, like Cincinnatus of old, to cultivate a portion of the soil which he had nobly contributed to redeem from vassalage. He consequently obtained a large grant of land, and, as a necessary appendage to the secluded life he had resolved upon, he had married a most excellent and accomplished lady, who, against the advice and wishes of her friends, had consented to accompany him to his dreary habitation, wisely feeling, that if happiness can not be found within the recesses of our own hearts, and in the resources of our own minds, whether we reside in the gayety of a city, or in the privacy of a wilderness, we must be forlorn and helpless creatures.

The Major had provided every thing to make life comfortable, and he had also added many of the luxuries to which his wife had been accustomed. His house, a more humble one than the present roomy edifice, was erected before he arrived, and, as he journeyed to his then distant home with many heavy carriages, he did not fail to convey such articles of taste and elegance as were suitable to the habits of her whom he had taken from the ease of a city life to the hardships of the bush.

He had also arranged with twelve young married men, several of whom were once in his own troop, to accompany

him, engaging to provide each of them with a farm of one hundred acres, a home, and other assistance in stock, on condition that they should give him their first year's labor. This little band, to prevent dissension, had drawn for the rotation of farms before their departure for the wilderness, and each had engaged to assist the other in clearing and building. It was also arranged that all those who remained with the Major beyond the term of his bond, was to receive a stipulated remuneration for his services. Thus they formed a community, which, under the auspices of their able president, could not fail to prosper. These men, their wives, and four domestics of the Major's, completed the colony.

Every thing thrived with the Major and his associates, and in three years from their entry upon the lands, every family was in possession of its home and farm, with a portion of the ground cleared. Since that period, twenty-five years had passed away, and what was then a tangled and meshy wood, was converted into the beloved habitation of two hundred peaceful settlers. By a strict integrity, Major Hewson had acquired a character of honorable renown. Those twelve men who came to the forest with him, were all alive, save one, and all were wealthy, and in their riches they were bound firmer in love to that worthy pioneer who had so ably guided them, and who so generously acknowledged their early help. A son and two daughters composed the family of the worthy Major, and they were the ornaments of his household and the pride of his life. His son was at this time with the army. His daughters were frequent visitors at New-York and Philadelphia, where they had relatives who were ever rejoiced to receive them, and it was on one of these visits that the younger daughter had encountered the Lieutenant.

It was the established rule in this sylvan paradise, to meet on "Thanksgiving-Day"—a period held sacred to the prosperity of the colony as well as to the country—where, after offering thanks for the past, and asking a blessing on the future, the whole brotherhood joined hands and hearts at the Major's in the evening. It was a family day, and as such the whole community assembled at the "Torrents," as the Major's residence was termed, which became the scene of such festive happiness and love as was seldom seen in so large a

circle. The hospitality of this abode of peace and contentment resounded far and near, and from sunrise to sunset, in all weather, the hall-door was significantly thrown back—a force of expression ever well construed by the weary traveler.

The Lieutenant still stood leaning on his rifle, surveying the rich landscape so picturesquely opened before him, when the enchantment was dispelled by the touch of the hunter, who observed:

“You may well gaze in astonishment, and admire the manner in which this wild place has been brought under the subjection of the ax and the plow. Modern art and civilization are triumphing over these ancient grounds, and have bowed them down, as they are subverting the barbarous aborigines. Yet, to effect the improvements you now see, it has occupied a quarter of a century of unceasing industry and care, and the impenetrable union of these bold and vigorous men who first accompanied the Major to this isolated dwelling-place. This acknowledged chief has not only acted with the most scrupulous integrity and justice himself, but he has instilled into the minds of those around him the same honorable principles. He has as much ascendancy over the black as the white man, and no Indian has ever been known to commit the slightest outrage upon his property. You will soon have an opportunity of seeing this admirable man: and to enjoy an evening with him may be reckoned among the rare occurrences of one’s life.”

The hunter led the way down a diagonal path toward the bottom of the ravine, where a rustic bridge crossed the stream, whence they pushed into what, in modern parlance, may be termed a park, which led to the residence. As they approached the house, they perceived, beneath a spreading oak, a pair of saddled horses, in the charge of a man whose face was concealed from their view. The entire crowd there looked on with some surprise, as they were evidently fresh, and in readiness for a journey. He also seemed desirous to recognize the servant in attendance, but he was equally unwilling to conceal his features. This increased the mystery, which was soon to be elucidated. They approached the house, reached the hall, and the Lieutenant was about to enter, when the sound of voices caught his ear, and he saw the flowing drapery of a

lady's dress. He paused, and the propriety of receding crossed his mind, when a sweet voice attracted his attention, and he found him to the spot.

"Farewell, farewell, dear Sinclair. I trust that you will pass General Harrison's outposts in safety."

"Fear not, dear Laura," was the reply in a manly tone; "I have a skillful guide, and, I doubt not, shall avoid notice without much danger."

An officer in the service of the United States could not hear the utterance of these words without immediate action. The Lieutenant instantly advanced. In the center of the hall stood a young and handsome man, in the undress military uniform of the British army; nearer the entrance-door stood a beautiful female figure. At the sound of footsteps, she turned suddenly round—her eyes met those of the Lieutenant, and, for an instant, the deadly pallor of her countenance alarmed the gentleman with whom she had been conversing; but the words of the Lieutenant quickly aroused her.

"Sir," said the Lieutenant, "I have accidentally heard words pronounced by you, which I, as an officer in the American navy, can not allow to remain unheeded. They seem to portend some evil design, and unless you can satisfy me to the contrary, I must request you to accompany me to the army of General Harrison."

The gentleman addressed, perceiving two men clad in the garb of hunters, was at first disposed to feel annoyed at this intrusion. This feeling, however, he controlled, and inquired, rather sarcastically:

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"I am Lieutenant Howard, of the United States navy."

"Not to be judged wandering in courtesy to you, I acknowledge myself to be Captain Sinclair, of the British army. In explanation, I must admit, that, for a day, I have put aside my nationality, and ventured to visit my very dear friends here, by avoiding the enemy's pickets. But, can not Congress better employ her champions of the sea, than to send them rusticated through her dense forests?"

Then saying, "Adieu, dear Laura," he left the hall by a side-door.

The Lieutenant, stung by this unwarrantable retort, and

mollened by Captain Sinclair's apparent affection for the lady from whom he had just parted, was about to rush after him, when Laura placed herself before him, concluding with great energy:

"You pass not here, Lieutenant Howard: you shall not violate the hospitality of my father, nor the sanctity of his roof. Major Hewson was never, until now, thought to be the protector of a traitor; nor were his daughters supposed to associate with one."

Laura immediately quitted the hall, in a state of considerable excitement; but by a passage different from that of the English officer.

The Lieutenant was transfixed—paralysed. For a time, he could neither utter a word nor move a step. His heart was torn by tumultuous passions. Only a few minutes previously he had been contemplating the delight of again meeting Laura Hewson; and now, upon the very threshold of that happiness, she had withdrawn from his presence in scorn. The furious pang of jealousy racked his mind, and his despondency was rendered more bitter from the circumstance, that he had surprised the only girl he ever loved, exchanging words of sweetness with his country's foe, whose forces were lying beyond those of the American army, and through or near which he must have passed, to reach the Major's residence. The instant he recovered from his bewilderment, he turned toward the hunter, whom he perceived standing easily near the door, and asking him to follow, retired to the spot where the horses had been standing—they were gone—and two horsemen were seen entering deeply on the road, beyond the gate leading to the house.

"How can we best pursue these men?" said the Lieutenant, hastily.

"Why pursue them?" said the hunter.

"To arrest the British officer, who has once passed our lines, and is now making toward them again."

"That you can not do. In a few minutes they will enter the forest, and I discovered, while you were in the hall, that the guide is Willie Hattie, whose experience in conducting horsemen through the woods is unparalleled in these parts. Besides, no spy rides there. The Major's character is above

suspicion. He and his family have fought in the ranks of freedom, from the time Washington first drew his sword. I believe it to be some love affair; and he is a bold disciple of Cypri, who rides through an enemy's country to reach his own camp."

The good-natured hunter was little aware of the keen dagger that he had planted in the heart of his companion by this observation. The Lieutenant stood musing distractedly for a few minutes. He determined, however, not to return to the house of the Major, but, overcome by anguish at the defeat of his cherished hopes, he proposed to continue their journey without rest. The hunter was not desirous to accept the Major's hospitality after what had just transpired, still he was well aware that both required not only repose and food for the night, but the untoward incidents which had delayed them, made it necessary to replenish their exhausted wallets. He therefore suggested the prudence of visiting a farm-house not far distant, the owner of which he well knew. No objection was made, and thither they went, and received a hearty welcome. The Lieutenant ate nothing; but retired at once to a room hastily prepared for him, and there, in the solitude of his chamber, he indulged unrepresed that intense agony of mind which is ever the severe and terrible penalty of the devoted and honorable but deluded lover. Without food, without sleep, he hastened on his journey—he coveted not repose—he sought the excitement of combat, and hoped that the tumult and battle of the camp would divert the bitter feelings of his agitated mind. In this sad state of mental painfulness he reached the encampment of General Harrison, who received him with courtesy, and gave full permission for the enlistment of such of his soldiers as might be willing to serve on board the American squadron under Commodore Perry. In a few days he had the satisfaction of marching a body of fine, determined fellows to the place of rendezvous on the banks of the lake.

The Commodore was rejoiced at his return and at his success, for he was now in a position to meet the enemy. His "look-outs" were placed on other lofty prominences besides the masts, and on the morning of the 10th of September, that ominous cheer went forth—"The enemy in sight!" The

vessels were instantly ordered out of harbor, and their decks were cleared for action. The Lieutenant ordered himself from all command, determined to remain beside his gallant leader, trusting that some such desperate service as was suitable to his reckless feelings would be necessary during the struggle. The brave hunter, too, would take his share of danger, and only stipulated to serve with the Lieutenant, in whom he had observed a carelessness of life and disposition of conduct so unlike his gentle yet bold and trusting nature when first they commenced their journey through the lonely forest. When the Lieutenant heard this sudden decision of his daring friend, he took him by the hand and said, "Duncan, I owe you my life, and I will stand by you if need be in the coming battle; but do not increase my debt to you. I have nothing now to live for, and only wish to perish beneath the banner of my country, and in hearing of the glorious cry of 'Victory!'"

CHAPTER VI.

THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.

THE little fleet, after some manoeuvring, soon faced the enemy, who was completely formed, and presented in the distance a very beautiful array. The most intense and painful silence reigned throughout the fleet, notwithstanding that the hearts were determined and brave, the appalling moments had their awful influence.

The lively *Albatross*, with her four guns, was ordered to the van, and was closely followed by the plucky *Serpent*, which, with her two swivels, proved a very stout in her designs. Then came the hero of the day, the intrepid *Perry*, his sails being hoisted on board the *Lacoste*, whose every timber had been growing in the woods of Erie a few months before the eventful battle. On her quarter deck stood the Commodore, and on his right was Lieutenant Howard, and with the exception of an occasional interchange of a few words, they seemed intent on watching the approach of the vessels. The

Caledonia and the more powerful *Niagara* followed in the wake of the *Laurance*. The smaller vessels, four in number, were more distant, being inferior sailers.

As might socks might, that the need of honor may be equal to the deed, so the Commadore sought the flag-ship of the enemy, and he, nothing loth, advanced to the awful challenge. As the *Detroit* (the enemy's flag) drew nearer, she fired the first gun, and the daring little *Serpent*, with her hideous swivel, responded to the defiance. Soon were these fearful antagonists engaged in deadly strife. The *Laurance* became the principal aim of the enemy, no less than three of whose vessels were directing their fire against her. In every effort of the *Laurance* to close with the *Detroit*, she was unsuccessful; but she sustained the fight most bravely. Her position was terrific, but it seemed the more congenial to the **excited feelings of the Lieutenant.**

In the early part of the encounter, the First and Second Lieutenants of the *Laurance* were slain, which caused a display of energy, bravery, and determination on the part of Lieutenant Howard, that excited the admiration of the whole crew. In the midst of the din and carnage of that dreadful onslaught, he was seen and heard. He rushed from gun to gun with words of cheerfulness and encouragement; he dropped a few words of consolation in the ear of the mangled sailor as he was borne to the surgeon, and extolled the glorious departure of those who had been hurled to death by the exalted dirge of their own cannon. Whenever the firing began to relax, he was there, and with his animating words and personal assistance, restored the fainter courage of the men. As one gun after another became worthless, he summoned the most able of the men around those that could be used, and by firing quicker, endeavored to conceal from the enemy, in some measure, their increasing weakness. In one of those heroic efforts to animate the men, he had assumed for the time the captaincy of a gun, when a ball of the enemy killed and disabled several of the gang, and he fell covered with human gore, but he found himself unscathed, and disentangling himself from the bodies of his divided companions, he again rushed to the spot where the danger was most imminent. Where the foe is not encountered hand to hand,

there are many deeds of individual daring, but none of personal triumph to record. But in the whole history of naval warfare, never was ship fought as was the *Lacandon*. For two hours was this vessel dinned and battered by the almost uninterrupted firing of three powerful ships. Almost every man on board was either killed or wounded. There was only one gun on the side toward the enemy available for use, and the last gallant action performed on board the rifled hull of this devoted vessel, was the firing of this gun by the Commadore and the Lieutenant, aided by a few men who were not so desperately injured.

This was the last effort of a brave and manly crew; neither ship nor men were longer fit for service. It was not so with the Commadore and the Lieutenant. The former had resolved to abandon the *Lacandon*, and to hoist his flag on board the *Nigara*, passing in a boat from one to the other. The latter had volunteered on a still more dangerous service, that of proceeding by similar means toward the four smaller craft, who were still distant, and under them closer into action. No sooner had they quitted the *Lacandon* than her colors were hauled down—the flag-ship had struck! The enemy, perceiving this, appeared on the belwaiks of their vessels, and gave three cheers for victory. But this sound of conquest carried no conviction with it. A breeze spring up, cleared away the impenetrable veil of smoke, and exhibited the national colors still flying on all the American vessels. The antagonists now viewed each other proudly, both still thirsting for blood. For a few minutes there was a general cessation of firing, while each, with unshaken readiness, prepared for the final contest.

During this fearful pause, the enemy had attempted to wear round, get into confusion, and were for a time lost of each other. At this critical moment, the shrewd and observant Commadore, perceiving his advantage, displayed his flag on board the *Nigara*, and bore down within pistol-shot of the enemy, ranged abreast of their ships, belled across their bows, and continued to deliver his fire from his starboard and larboard guns, till the shotless hulls the *Lacandon* proclaimed that the tide of battle had changed, and that those brave voices had so lately rung with the merry cheer of triumph.

were now wailing beneath the sufferings and humili-ty of defeat.

In the mean time, the indefatigable and undaunted Lieutenant had reached the small-craft, and immediately hastened them into close action, he himself taking the command of one. He boldly led them to the larger vessels of the enemy, and valiantly ranging himself within fifty yards of the *Queen Charlotte*, carrying twenty guns, with his single heavy gun, he poured into her grape and canister with such terrible rapidity and destructive effect, as to distract much of the attention of that vessel from her mightier rival.

The intrepidity of the Lieutenant had not passed unnoticed by the enemy, and the Captain of the *Queen Charlotte* now detected the same enthusiastic and fearless spirit that had fought so terribly on board the *Lancaster*. A skillful gunner was ordered to silence this outrageous foe. He prepared to obey the mandate. The Lieutenant was at this time standing erectly, near his formidable gun: his features were blackened with gunpowder, and his person was besmeared with the gore of his fellow-countrymen; and his gray eyes, fierce and resolved, emitted sparks of the sea of fire which flowed within him. He seemed as if equally defying their shot and their missiles, and his loosened jacket left the passage to his heart uncovered. But he was not to die! Near to the chosen quarry there stood a placid figure of large stature, armed with the deadly rifle. An eye that had cowed the lynx had jealously scrutinized the movements of the enemy, and their sinister scheme was unravelled, and when the dexterity of the artful gunner was about to be demonstrated, he fell a corpse upon the deadly weapon he had so truly leveled—the unerring ball of the noble hunter had penetrated his brain.

The enraged Commander, seeing his pernicious intentions baffled, stepped forward to issue more imperative directions, but he was arrested in his advance, and fell dead beneath the almost fiendish raking of his vessel, and his first officer became fearfully wounded. As well also on other sides, it was now evident that a conflict so fierce, so close, and consequently so deadly, could not be long sustained, and soon one of the officers of the *Queen Charlotte* appeared on the taffrail of that vessel, waving a white handkerchief, affixed to that very

equivocal emblem of peace—a bloodless peace. Thus terminated a glorious engagement, by which the whole of the English squadron of six vessels, and mounting sixty guns, became the prize of the valiant Americans.

There was a hazardous moment, at one period of the engagement, which, with a less courageous, persevering, and indomitable people, might have led to a defeat. The sinking of the *Laurence*, the disappearance of the Commander's flag, and the victorious cheer of the enemy, might have produced a less inlubitable foe; but with these children of the lakes, it only created a pause, and the unfurling of the Commander's flag on board the *Niger*, and the spirited example of the Lieutenant to the smaller vessels to cheer, cleared up the doubt, and elicited three hearty cheers, which awakened the British to the conviction that the victory was not theirs. When the battle was won, the loud shouts of gladness of the gallant conquerors, were blended in discordant contrast with the shrieks of anguish from the dying and wounded.

The ireful *Laurence* had again assumed the graceful array of the Stars and Stripes, and the Commander, impelled by a predilection for his chosen ship, passed on board her to receive the acknowledgments of his supremacy from the rebel foe.

Adulation met Lieutenant Howard on every side. The Commadore highly eulogized his conduct and his extraordinary bravery, the officers congratulated him in words of unbounded praise, and the quivering sailors recounted his various deeds with rapture. But this state warrior was unmoved by their admiration. He had fought for death; but the grim monster had avoided him, and Mars had crowned him with renown and honor. If these distinctions had been conveyed to the heart of his dear Laura, he would have worn his coveted laurels with delight; but to feel his suit rejected, ere he had in words disclosed the secret of his love, gave him an abhorrence toward life, and all the emotions of it.

The army of General Harrison now advanced, as that of the British recoiled from Detroit and Michigan, and followed it into Upper Canada. There additional fame awaited the Lieutenant, for, as the army had so nobly contributed to the naval success on Lake Erie, our hero, on the occasion of the battle of the Moravian Town, joined the American invaders.

volunteers, in which he led a troop. In the course of this energetic struggle, the Lieutenant, together with a few of his troop, had been driven from the main body. In this irremediable position he withdrew, with his little force, where he could observe the progress of the fight from a gentle rise in the ground. Here stood his gallant little band. The horses, with distended nostrils, and impatiently champing their bits, made known their passionate eagerness for the fray, while the men, with more control, were not less excited by the maddening sounds of war. From this spot the Lieutenant studied every movement of the enemy. At length the moment came for action. He observed some hesitation in the array of the foe—an oscillation—and commencing his own headlong vigor to those he led, made such a fiery charge on that weak point, as made him mainly instrumental in obtaining that important victory, by which nearly the whole of the right wing of the British army laid down their arms.

In the midst of the battle, he perceived an officer of the enemy, who appeared to be severely wounded, defending himself against the attack of a mounted trooper, with the unloaded musket of a dead soldier who was lying beside him; with a sense of generosity which was a part of his character, he instantly hastened to the rescue, and the officer at once yielded himself prisoner, thanking his noble adversary for his timely interference; but when their eyes met, he was astonished to recognize Captain Sinclair.

His prisoner's surprise was not less at seeing one whom he had met in the forest in the dress of a hunter, and who then described himself as a naval officer, now riding over a victorious field as a dragoon. He approached the Lieutenant with a salute, saying:

"I thank you for your kind interference. It has preserved my life;" and then added, interrogatively, "I think we have met before?"

"Sir," replied the Lieutenant, "the service I have rendered you is only what is due from one soldier to another; but you need not remind me of our former meeting. It will be much safer for you, while a prisoner, to conceal the circumstances of your appearance in the forest, which I then thought so criminal, though I now ascribe your visit to naught but what is honorable."

"You judge me rightly, sir," replied Captain Sinclair. "But may I ask if the naval officer whom I encountered in the woods, and he whose dauntless bearing in the lake engagement is held in reverence by his enemies, is the same as the dragoon before me, to whom I am so much indebted?"

"I am the same one," said the Lieutenant. "But you are faint and bleeding. I will procure some assistance."

He then gave directions for his conveyance to the surgeon, with a request that he might receive early attention.

Again did the Lieutenant meet the plaudits of all around, and the delighted General was equally lavish in his eulogy. The daring charge, made at a point where, for a moment, the enemy wavered, was worthy of a practical commander, and it at once struck a panic in the British ranks, from which they had no opportunity to recover. It displayed a mind predisposed to military tactics—bold in conception, watchful in opportunity, judicious and prompt in decision, and then an inevitable determination in the achievement of the object. It was thought in all circles, that this combination of great military qualifications, only needed the opportunity of war to advance Lieutenant Howard to the highest rank.

But these munificent opinions availed him nothing. There was only one species of promotion that he wanted, and that to him seemed unattainable. Opulent in fame, he was intelligent in all that related to the affections of the heart. Those bright and luminous eyes no longer shed their radiance on him, nor would those thoughts, where he had hoped to maintain the upper place, ever again revert to him in love.

The conquest of the upper lakes having been effected by these naval and military victories, the army of General Harrison was transported by the fleet to Buffalo. In the vessel in which the Lieutenant sailed, was an officer of the American army, to whom he became particularly attached. He had not been engaged in the affair of the Meriville Town. They had become acquainted with each other some days before their departure from Detroit; but now, in the close confinement of the voyage, they were rarely separated. One day, while pacing the deck together, the officer, whose name was Hewson, inquired of the Lieutenant if he had a relative who served in the volunteers, in the late engagement.

"Because," continued he, "I have a dear friend who was severely wounded in the affair at the Moravian Towns, and whose life was preserved by an officer in the mounted volunteers, whose name is Howard. It is he, I believe, who is spoken of so highly for his bold and chivalrous charge upon the British."

"I must acknowledge," said the Lieutenant, "that I am the person to whom you refer. I acted for a few days with the volunteers, and had the satisfaction to protect a defenseless and wounded officer from the animosity of one of our troopers. Is it possible, that you are acquainted with Captain Sinclair?"

"Your declaration astounds me," replied Captain Hewson. "Are you, a naval officer, absolutely the same brave soldier who led the charge, of which I have heard so much? I almost feel a sense of insignificance before you."

"Let me hear no more of it. There has been too much already said about that piece of service. It only needed an eye, a stout heart, and a little judgment to effect all I did, and I think we all possess these advantages. Yet, my dear Hewson, I have omitted to name the most important requirement, that is, the opportunity. You, in my place, would have done no less. These vaunted deeds of might are frequently hollow when scrutinized. But what of Captain Sinclair?"

"He is one of my most devoted friends, though, unfortunately, not the enemy's foe. Our attachment was formed in times of peace, and although stern war has placed us in opposing armies, I do not think that our mutual esteem has suffered. He is, poor fellow, sadly wounded, and I have applied for his removal to our home on parole. I will not conceal from you that he is much attached to my sister; but my father is averse to an alliance with our country's enemy."

"Your father's residence?" said the Lieutenant. "May I inquire where your father resides?"

"In the bush, forsooth, and I am but a twig of the under-wood. But you may possibly have heard of Major Hewson of the Torrents, in—"

"I know, I know," quickly interrupted the Lieutenant. "I once passed his house, and a noble place it is."

"You passed the house?" said Captain Hewson, in surprise.

"Did you not know that it is almost criminal to disregard the silent invitation of that ever-open door? Few miss the true that allegory of my father's hospitality."

"I was then on an important mission to the General," said the Lieutenant. "I and the brave and simple-minded hunter, Duncan, journeyed together, and were much delayed by Indians on our trail. But in the course of one season in New-York, I had the pleasure of spending much time with your sister."

"Indeed!" said Captain Hewson. "Which sister? I have two sisters."

"I think the younger—Laura."

At this critical point of the conversation the friends were joined by one or two other officers, and the subject was discontinued. The fleet reached its destination, the soldiers were disembarked, and the Commodore now intimated his intention to resign the command on the lake. The Lieutenant, to whom this resolve had been previously communicated, could not be induced to remain. He preferred the sea to the lake service, and had been only induced to join the latter from his devotion to the Commodore.

CHAPTER VII.

A VISIT TO THE TORRENTS.

THE inflexible hunter, who felt an insatiable partiality for the Lieutenant, attended him to Buffalo, and was anxious to learn his design to leave the squadron, and attempted to dissuade him from his purpose.

"No, no, good Duncan," he replied: "this cruising on the lake is an occupation unsuited to an ardent and impetuous nature like mine. The enemy is destroyed, and there is little excitement to be encountered in these narrow waters. The Commodore is anxious to be gone, and I certainly share in his eagerness."

"I am heartily sorry for it," said the hunter. "I had

hoped that you would remain, and that I might occasionally see you: for, although I am of a lonely habit, and am not given to crave companionship in hunting-paths, I do confess that since I have been with you my propensity is shaken, and I feel a distaste to enter the woods alone. But," he continued with great delicacy, "I fear some grief oppresses you, and could I do aught to lessen—"

"You have refused my that poor soldier, Duncan, by your generosity. At the hazard of your life you saved me from destruction. But this fealty to your own rich feelings is inimical to mine. You only protect my earthly torments. Yet, anomalous as it may appear, the love and gratitude which man can cherish toward man, I have for you, my most excellent and worthy friend."

For a moment they gazed on each other; their hands met—the clasp of sincerity was firm, cementing a friendship which lasted during life.

The Lieutenant now sought, in silence and thoughtfulness, the quarters of Captain Hewson, in order to communicate his resolution. He found that officer in great delight. It was unlikely that the enemy would be active again till spring, and he had consequently obtained permission to return home, and was preparing to do so. He also said that he had received a letter from his father, in which he stated that Captain Sinclair had arrived at the Torrents, and was improving in health. "There are some other remarks in the letter," he continued, "which I can not undertake. He says that Sinclair speaks of having first met you at the Torrents, shortly before you became so much distinguished at the battle of Lake Erie. Is it so, or are they in some error?"

"My first meeting with Captain Sinclair is involved in some little ambiguity," replied the Lieutenant, desirous to avoid an explanation.

"But," persisted Captain Hewson, "Sinclair states that he met you at the Torrents. Can it be so?"

"I think that I before told you that, on a mission from the Commodore to General Harrison, I passed through your father's property. It was on that occasion that I first encountered Captain Sinclair."

"Is it possible," exclaimed Captain Hewson, "that Sinclair

could have been so imprudent—nay, so mad—as to venture to my father's house, when the intervening country was occupied by our army? Was not the melancholy fate of Major André, in the last war, sufficiently vivid before his perception? And does he imagine that our discipline is less rigid now than at that time? Had I, his dearest friend, detected him within our lines, I should have been a traitor to my country not to have caused his arrest; although, by that terrible alternative, I might have tarnished the honor of my father's name, imperiled the felicity of my sister, and rendered the remainder of my own life an existence of remorseful bitterness, for bringing to disgrace and ignominy the friend of my heart. Surely, Lieutenant, there are some circumstances to mitigate this heinous error?"

"You have, indeed, limned a fearful portrait of the evil he might have caused. I do not believe that he had other design than to visit your sister. I thought otherwise at the time we met, and, as an American officer, attempted his arrest; but he eluded me. I have never before, nor since, so much rejoiced at my own defeat."

"But," said Captain Hewson, "I do not yet understand whether your meeting occurred at my father's house."

The Lieutenant, perceiving that he could no longer conceal the incidents of his encounter with Captain Sinclair, replied:

"Toward the close of a fine evening in August, I approached your father's friendly door, and as I was about to enter, I heard voices in the hall, one of which I remembered as that of a lady. I was about to retreat; but words were uttered that no servant of his country could hear unchallenged. I entered. Saw an English officer—Captain Sinclair. I asked an explanation; received a somewhat curt answer. The lady then addressed me, and by her testimony, Captain Sinclair escaped me. That lady was your sister."

"Ah, it is natural," said the Captain. "They forget the higher duties incumbent upon men in the stern necessities of life and think that he is wrong if, to their judgment, he is harsh. My sister spoke from the anxieties of her heart. Were swords drawn upon the occasion?"

"No; between us stood your sister," said the Lieutenant, "who passionately charged me with violating the sanctity of

your father's home. In the interval, the Captain passed out at the back of the hall, and when I reached the lawn, he was galloping toward the woods."

"Let us be thankful for the mercy," said Captain Hewson. "We are now a happy family; but this one dark error might have plunged us into an abyss of incurable wretchedness. I think I penetrate the reason you refused our shelter."

"I did not return to your house," said the Lieutenant.

"Then you committed an offense for which you must atone in person," exclaimed the Captain. "You must not refuse to accompany me home, and enter upon your trial and defense, when it is not impossible that you may be adjudged to remain with us a month or two."

"The punishment I would joyously agree to, were I fitted for such fair society," said the Lieutenant; "but I can not live without excitement. I should expire beneath the quiet smile of your delightful home. I am about to quit the lake service, because there is no longer sufficient to arouse my mind, or entertain my predilection for a turbulent life. A fit subject, truly, to be introduced into a family whose primary feature is the practice of amiable virtues."

"You ever underestimate yourself," said the Captain. "You are unwell. There is a perturbation in your mind which the calm of solitude would soothe, and where so appropriate a place as our noble wilderness?"

"I thank you; but I can not accompany you. I am unalterable," said the Lieutenant.

"I will not to-day take your denial," remarked the Captain. "In the mean while, I will write to my father that I shall be with him shortly, and that I have hopes to bring with me an erratic knight who lately committed an alleged offense against his hospitality; and that, in consequence of some dark sentences that escaped from his daughter Mary, did—"

"Nay, nay, indict me rightly," said the Lieutenant, smiling. "You have miscelled the lady, and she your sister."

"Excuse me, I am correct," said the Captain. "Mary and Sinclair ever date together; and he who dare gainsay that, is likely to have the gruntlet of the latter hurled at him in defiance."

"But it was Laura with whom I saw him in the hall," said the Lieutenant.

"Indeed! then I ask pardon," said the Captain. "But did you receive no better greeting than you have described, from one whom you had known?"

"Her thoughts seemed intent on Captain Sinclair," observed the Lieutenant. "But did you not say that there was an attachment between your sister Laura and your friend?"

"Most certainly not," replied the Captain. "You misunderstood me, and I ought to put you right. It is Mary, the elder, and not Laura, to whom Sinclair is devoted."

The Lieutenant now awoke from his dreamy trance. A flash of conscious error glistened in his mind. Was the root of his agonies so imaginative? Painful and happy thoughts rushed through his sensations, but more of shame than of fear. The accidental avowal just uttered by Captain Hewson could not be questioned. He became confused and troubled. He sought to be alone. Under these powerful feelings, he offered his hand to Captain Hewson, remarking: "As you surmise, I am unwell. I will see you again to-morrow, and if I can subdue my cynical predisposition, I will not refuse your kindness."

"Farewell," said the Captain; "I shall faithfully anticipate your companionship."

Lieutenant Howard hastened to his quarters. He was impatient to be alone, that he might revolve, in the solitude of his room, the pleasing aspect of the late discovery. How he had misconstrued the conduct of Laura! She had sacrificed the best feelings of her heart to shield the sister of her sister from imperious danger. He could now admire her for unsullied virtue, where he had blamed her for immorality. The soothing beam of conviction was pouring new life into those wounds of jealousy, and he was anxious to embrace an opportunity to expiate the offences of his conduct. If her heart were the same, she too must have suffered severely, so that the imprudence of Captain Sinclair had caused a disaster that even Captain Hewson had not supposed. All his reflections, however, confirmed his resolution to accept the generous bidding of the Captain. Thus passed the night, and sweet and balmy slumbers were chased from the pillow by the more harassing and refreshing anxiety of hope.

Right early in the morning he attended the hunter, and after

relating to him the desire of the Captain that he should accompany him home, he concluded by hinting the probability that he might do so.

The hunter, who was no less pleased at the circumstance than at the altered manner of the Lieutenant, at once expressed his intention to accompany them. He could not, however, repress his joy at the improved appearance of his friend, to which the latter replied :

"I have taken a new medicine, Duncan, and it certainly has benefited me wonderfully in one night."

The hunter unconsciously rejoined : "Let us go with the Captain, sir; there are sweeter herbs in the woods than drugs in the surgery."

"Possibly," observed the Lieutenant, in some confusion; "but I will seek Captain Hewson, and learn from him when he intends to leave."

The Lieutenant soon found the Captain, who was engaged in his hut, and they at once renewed the subject of their yesterday's discussion.

"You appear remarkably better, Howard," said he. "Tomorrow I quit the camp for home, and shall march through break and bramble until I reach it. You will not allow me to dare all the perils of the forest without your protection?"

"The path is dangerous," replied the Lieutenant; "but if you think the visit of a poor sailor will be acceptable to your family, I will accompany you."

"You confer the honor, my dear fellow; we are but the humble recipients," responded the Captain, in great exultation. "Why you, the hero of the sea and land, will establish a new epoch in the history of our little commonwealth by your appearance, and thenceforth time will be computed from the period—'When the gentleman who was at the Major's, beat all the English by land and by sea.' But, indeed, there is welcome and cheer at the Torrens for all the world, providing it does not appear excessive; but my friend, and he the deliverer of Sinclair, can only be greeted as an old and valued acquaintance."

"Hewson," exclaimed the Lieutenant, "I will go with you; and Duncan, who has twice saved my life, insists on being our guide."

"Admirable," said the Captain. "I shall be doubly welcomed in such company." My father esteems him very highly. A soldier, also, whose father occupies a farm at the Torrents, has procured a furlough, so that we shall form a pretty party of four, and no one is so well qualified to lead a hunt as the hunter."

Each agreed to occupy himself in the requisite preparations during the remainder of the day. The Commandere had quitted Buffalo, and the Lieutenant proceeded to visit his several friends, from whom he was about to separate. This accomplished, he returned to his quarters, where he found a note from Captain Hewson, appointing an early hour on the approaching morning for their departure. The Lieutenant walked to the camp to inform the hunter of the arrangement, whom he found already in possession of the knowledge, which he had obtained from the soldier who was to accompany them. He advanced toward the Lieutenant with a smile, and expressed his gladness at the result.

"The weather is fine," he said, "and a few days will take us to the Torrents. We shall pass on without interruption. We are supreme now, and the Indians have abandoned the forest."

At the appointed hour the travelers assembled, and was the Lieutenant the last at the rendezvous. Each bore a knapsack, and all wore the green hunting-shirt, and carried a rifle. They soon entered the wood, the hunter taking the lead, and thus in single file they threaded the maze of the winding forest. The late victories had struck terror among the hostile Indians, and no trail of recent warfare was imprinted on the earth. The party advanced by long marches, and in six days—passing over hills, through valleys, rivers, ponds, rivers, and sinuosities of the virgin and unexplored region—they stood, foot-sore but heart-whole, upon the brink of the very precipice whence the Lieutenant had before surveyed the ample park of the worthy Major. It was just at sunset, and that glorious orb was filling the western heavens with its effulgence. The only sounds perceptible to the ear were the rushing of the torrent, the lowing of the cattle, and the bleating of sheep. But Captain Hewson did not allow much time to be expended in contemplating the

blending of these natural and domestic incongruities. He at once descended toward the river, and, crossing the rustic bridge, alighted upon the soil of his father's property. They crossed the green sward in silence, for the hearts of all beat with lively though different emotions, and soon distinguished through the trees the beacon of hospitality—the open door. They reached the house apparently unobserved, and entered the spacious hall, when the Captain, putting down his rifle, entered one of the rooms; cries of surprise and joy were heard, and for a moment all was again silent. Then the door reopened, and there appeared the Major and his son. The former was near sixty years of age, of lofty stature, and well proportioned. His forehead was expansive, his brows rather projecting, his hair perfectly white, and the *ensemble* of his visage was so full of intelligence and benevolence, that he bore an air of conquest in his mien, and no one who saw him could longer be surprised at the inroads he made upon the good feelings of all whom he encountered. He approached the Lieutenant with a smile upon his countenance, and met him with pleasure and kindness.

"My son," he said, "tells me when I have the honor to welcome to my house and to our little colony, for so rarely are we favored in this secluded spot by visitors, that we make, by common claim, each guest a general property. We are, besides, your debtors, for your generous money extended toward our friend, Captain Sinclair, who, I regret to add, has not yet left his room."

The Major then extended his hand to the hunter, and also to the soldier, John Smith, and they were ushered into the room where sat Mrs. Hewson, who appeared to be some years the Major's junior, and who still retained her air of elegance, and a portion of her early beauty. She rose to receive the visitors, remarking to the Lieutenant:

"You are not unknown by name within our circle. My daughter Lerra recognized in the dealer's naval officer and the bold dragoon the name of a gentleman whom she has often met in society."

The entrance of Mary and Lerra Hewson prevented a reply from the Lieutenant, and the Captain immediately introduced him to his sister. To the latter the Lieutenant remarked:

"I am most happy to have the advantage of renewing our acquaintance beneath your father's roof, and I trust to enjoy some of those green shades which I have often heard you describe with so much rapture."

Laura at once extended her hand, saying, in a scarcely audible voice:

"You have passed through terrible dangers since last we met."

"Only the ordinary chances of my profession," said the Lieutenant, "to which your brother is equally amenable."

The travelers, who bore evidences of fatigue, and who certainly were not in the most propitious guise for the society of ladies, now dispersed, the Lieutenant being conducted to his room by the Captain, the Major expressing a hope that in an hour he should meet them all at supper.

CHAPTER VIII.

THANKSGIVING DAY IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE allotted period specified by the Major for dressing was not exceeded by the Lieutenant, and his improved appearance did not escape the observation of the ladies. The Lieutenant was fortunately placed beside Laura Weston, and he soon perceived, by the manner in which she accepted the usual civilities of the table, that her heart had suffered no alteration. The supper was a somewhat rich repast, which was rendered additionally agreeable by the association of so many bright and pleasing faces. The Major was particularly desirous that his guests should do justice to the dishes, remarking that the limited circle in their passage through the woods ought to impart piquancy to the appetite, now that they were within the reach of better viands.

The early part of the evening was passed in conversation, during which allusion was made to the late triumphs of the American arms, which it was thought by the Major would greatly influence the continuance of the war by Britain. The

ladies, however, were soon invited to the piano, and from their rich voices, and the occasional assistance of the Captain and the Lieutenant, a sweet melody of sounds arose from these happy friends.

The following morning the Lieutenant visited Captain Sinclair, who, although not confined to his bed, was unable to move beyond the adjoining room. The Captain expressed his obligations to him in the most touching manner, and a cordial friendship was established between them.

Soon after the Lieutenant had descended from his visit to Captain Sinclair, he was astonished to perceive that the whole male population of the settlement were deployed before the house. John Smith, after having astonished his friends by a vivid recital of his own valiant doings in the late achievements, had confessed that one who excelled him in renown was at the Major's. The intimation was not lost on this host of red-locks; indeed, they thought it a portion of their duty to welcome a stranger to this lonely region, for although the Major performed the hospitality of the place, they conceived it incumbent on them to share in the offices of reception. Thus all the men and boys swept along the avenue leading to the residence, to a house which they had themselves appointed, and at which no one was more astonished than the person whom it was intended to honor. The Major and his son, accompanied by the Lieutenant, now appeared among them, and an interchange of the most friendly greetings ensued. The morning being exceedingly fine, the Lieutenant promiscuously conversed with the visitors for two hours, sometimes conversing with one, and then with another, never ceasing to impress upon them that, if they had any pleasure in seeing him, their thanks were due wholly to the hunter, who had, in the midst of the most frightful peril, stood forth unscathed, and twice saved his life from the remorseless foe. The hunter, who had ever been in great favor among this honest and worthy fraternity, now became their absolute idol, and they did not fail to seek him and endeavor to obtain a more minute detail of the terrible fight than was recounted by the Lieutenant. As the morning progressed, however, these worthy pioneers, leaving the Captain and his friend to pay them an early visit, drew off in small parties, and hastened

home to relate all that had occurred to their wondering wives and daughters.

The Major's family, in this primeval region, lived at an early hour, and in the afternoon Captain Hewson proposed to his sisters a walk to some of those old haunts which might prove interesting to a stranger. They assented with pleasure, and Laura and the Lieutenant, preceded by the Captain and his sister, were soon side by side on their way to the woods. They proceeded silently for some time, when, at length, the former observed:

"I am glad that I have the opportunity to express my regret at the unwarrantable language I used toward you on a former occasion. It has caused me much distress, and—"

"Name it not," interrupted the Lieutenant; "those words are only remembered by me as serving me in covering the retreat of a gentleman in a most dangerous position. But I am anxious also to explain to you that my inevitable duty extorted from me the course of conduct which I pursued toward Captain Sinclair."

"I know that a sailor's and a soldier's duty leave them no option. But I was not aware of the terrible penalty that might have been consequent on Sinclair's rashness in adventuring here, until my brother so forcibly revealed the monstrous danger to both him and ourselves, that Mary and I were horrified at the dreadful picture."

"I have no doubt but that your brother was desirous to impress upon your friend the necessity of never repeating such imprudence, which not only involved his own safety, but imperiled the happiness and honor of his friends."

"Sinclair seems much altered," said Laura, "since he has been suffering from the attack of his long-expected fever. He seems to think more deeply. The ghastly approach of death, at the moment you delivered him from the grasp of the trooper, has made a serious imprint on his volatile mind."

Captain Hewson, little by little, engaged in conversation with his sister then were the Lieutenant and Laura with each other, wandered beneath the grateful shade of the noble forest, and, when the latter had reached one of those delightful openings which commanded a view of the rushing waters of the cataract, whose roar had subsided in the distance to a gentle murmur,

their companions were no longer visible. Unaware as to the direction that they had taken, the Lieutenant entered a most enticing alcove, formed by the entwining branches of the wild grape, over a luxuriant carpet of silky moss, and where the ladies had carved a rustic seat to be constructed. Seated here, inhaling the fragrance of the wild-flowers, and embowered by the lavish smiles and abundance of nature, the Lieutenant was so charmed that he could no longer restrain his feelings, but at once declared in words the language which was so often wafted to the heart through the expressive medium of the eye. Laura listened with unspeakable pleasure; but the power of utterance was denied her—she could only return the gentle pressure of the Lieutenant's hand, and they sat inwrapped in the rich confidence of a mutual and tender love. The Lieutenant felt himself indeed in elysium.

But mortal bliss is subject to encroachment, and before these lovers were aware of the approach of foot-steps, the Captain and his sister stood before them. The pythonic eye of Mary detected the truth, and she endeavored to relieve the parties by rallying them upon their listless conduct, and their want of appreciation of the beauties of this scene; and the Captain unconsciously assisted them yet more, by protesting that he only was to blame, for having allowed himself to be too much engrossed in conversation to draw attention to the various points of interest, forgetting that his sister Laura was a far more efficient guide, both in point of geographical and artistic knowledge.

The party returned home together, and soon after their arrival the Lieutenant sought an interview with the Major. It was with much astonishment that he listened to a proposal for Laura's hand, nor was he prepared to commit the happiness of his daughter, who was endeared to him by her surpassing virtues, to the care of one who had made such a hasty choice. But when it was explained that they had met before, and had silently remarked each other with preference, the Major admitted that he could better appreciate the feelings of the Lieutenant, and concluded by saying that "the honor of the alliance can not be questioned; but as the propriety of my daughter in such an important step is a vital subject to Mrs. Henson and myself, I am desirous of speaking with

Laura and her mother, before I venture to pronounce to you my concurrence."

The Lieutenant withdrew from the audience with visible satisfaction, and as he was crossing the hall to an opposite apartment, he encountered the Captain, who, warmly seizing him by the hand, said: "I have heard all; and although surprised, am rejoiced beyond expression." He had been some time in the library, which he was about to quit, when the Major entered from an opposite door. He immediately resumed the subject of their conversation, by saying: "My dear sir, I find that Mrs. Howard has anticipated me in the matter of our conference this morning. Laura has opened her heart to her mother, and related all the circumstances of your early acquaintance. Every hesitation on my part is removed, and I can now receive you as an intended member of our family." The Major immediately left the room, considerably affected.

This happy confirmation given to his love, imparted joy to the heart of the Lieutenant. In the evening of that day, all met together, for even Sinclair, although lame and weak, was no longer confined to his own apartments. Love was triumphant — doubts were dispelled — and all were victors, and the face of each was clothed in radiant cheerfulness. The ladies, with an innate grace of habit, which did not relax in this isolated region, proceeded to the harp and piano, and the rich melody of the music, and the harmony of the voices commingled with it, not only inspired the hearts of Sinclair and the Lieutenant with ecstasy, but awakened feelings in the worthy woodland parson and his admirable lady, which is the reward of those parents who foster their children in the purity of Christian dependence, and in the cherished principles of love, of reverence, and of virtue.

The Major had intimated a particular desire that, as "Thanksgiving-Day," was approaching, all should remain to celebrate that ancient and memorable festival, and his son had consequently applied for an extension of absence, which was readily accorded him; but he did not succeed in obtaining the same favor for John Smith, who had to return, much to his dissatisfaction; nor did he fail to call the attention of his friends to this compulsory tradition, as a proof that true liberty had been obtained by the late victories.

The hunter had departed for a few days; he could not endure so long a period of inactivity. Before he left, the Lieutenant had confided to him the state of his heart, whom he then reminded, how he had foretold that the pharmacy of the woods was superlative in curative properties.

The Lieutenant now visited all those romantic places which had rendered the woods so dear to Laura, from her infancy. Some had their legend, some their history, and all abounded in beauty. He and Laura frequently rode to the more distant parts, and were often accompanied by Captain Hewson and Mary. The evenings were occupied in music, singing, and in conversation, and the amiability and winning graces of Laura were never more alluringly illustrated than when displayed in her own family circle. This she loved above all others, and she contributed to its mirth and comfort by every effort. Each day unfolded to the Lieutenant new features of admiration in her character, and in such unmeasured reverence did the Lieutenant hold her, that had he earlier been aware of her true excellence, he might have doubted whether he could offer a hand worthy her acceptance. He reposed in an atmosphere of enthusiasm, and time passed on unrecked, until the appearance of the hunter awakened him to the truth that he had returned no earlier than he promised. All welcomed their old friend, and Laura's smiles turned with benediction, as she approached him.

The national festival — "Thanksgiving-Day," so dear to those who dwell in this land of America — had arrived. Early in the morning the entire community visited the Major and his family, to renew their thanks and express their gratitude for his increasing kindness. The Major received them with a benevolence of heart ever exemplified in his countenance, acknowledged himself their debtor, as he was but a poor auxiliary in the community of labor, so necessary on the first settlement in this almost discouraging region.

The whole party partook of breakfast, soon after which they repaired to church, which was picturesquely situated on the brow of a hill, not far distant. No minister had accompanied them to the forest, nor had they since added one to their number. But they considered a hope of worship more

indispensable, and there, each Sabbath, prayers were offered up either by the Major or others of the congregation, and a sermon was preached from selections of the divines most eminent for piety and knowledge, which were infinitely more impressive than the oratory of the clergy of the day. The Major was also assiduous in collecting religious works, and the most lucid dissertations and explanations on the obscure portions of Scripture, to which the settlers had ready access. Thus this guileless community increased in the love of God and Christian love, and by their own command over themselves they avoided, and by their dwelling in this secluded vale they escaped, many of the iniquities too frequent in a large population.

The sacred meeting of this exemplary people was inaugurated by a prayer from the Major, in which he supplicated that the same increasing blessings might be extended to their Christian efforts, which had attended their secular occupations. Several other inhabitants delivered addresses, many of whom implored their children to maintain the principles which they had been so carefully taught. Each prayer was spoken with such sincerity and ardent pathos, as to assure the listener that the sentiments emanated from the inspiration of the soul.

In the evening the colony again assembled at the Major's, for the purpose of taking supper. After a short delay, the guests were ushered into the dining apartment: they were soon seated, the grace was pronounced, and the meal served unexcelled munificence. The company did no injustice to the liberality of the worthy donor, but ate to their hearts' content. The supper was succeeded by a dessert of the fruits of the settlement, and by preserves from trees which had been planted by the Major and his family. The feast was also enriched by various wines made in the household. A complimentary sentiment to the Major was soon prepared, and uttered with every demonstration of joy and gratitude. The men cheered, their wives and daughters waved their handkerchiefs, and the children clapped their hands. When this burst of enthusiasm had subsided, the Major arose, and his wife and children did the same. Twice he attempted to speak, but utterance was denied him, and his family began to feel alarmed, when the

words, "My dear brethren," relieved their anxieties. After a slight pause he resumed: "My duties must proclaim the gratitude of my heart. I have no language for my feelings, and even if I were to attempt it, my emotions would again depress my power of utterance, and render me voiceless. Such intense matters of the heart must remain untold; but you know by your own feeling in generosity, what mine must be in gratitude. As a community, I think we are unequalled in the history of the States. At the disbanding of the army of Independence, I obtained this grant of land. I enlisted you, my dear friends, to accompany me to this untried locality, because I knew that none but stout hearts could sustain the inevitable deprivations attending upon a pioneer encampment. We had shared the hardships, the labors, and the perils of the battle-field, and we each knew the others' powers of endurance. We came here, we began our work, and by our persevering industry, your inflexible unity, and your readiness and even eagerness to aid each other, you have strengthened in wealth, in virtue and integrity, and in true Christian principles. No selfish narrowness has ever restricted your duty toward your neighbor, and your singleness of conduct has made you a contented, happy and rich community. We came into the midst of this forest in a peaceable character, and we used the arts of conciliation and not of provocation, and those of the Indians who approached us in menace, left us in the calmness of amity. Since our sojourn in these now blooming pastures, ineffable mercy has been extended to us—two only of our number have been summoned from earth to immortality—one my worthy friend—the other my dear son. Let us repress the tear of selfishness and prepare to join them, for it is our inevitable fate."

The Major sat down amid profound silence. The enthusiasm which the earlier portion of his address had elicited, was subdued by the subsequent melancholy allusion—it recalled to their minds the awful scene of the dread passage of the soul from earth.

The solemnity of thought had remained undisturbed for some time, when Silas Marchon, formerly a subaltern officer under the Major, said: "I reverence your feelings, noble patron, nor would I adventure to invade this sacred pause

in our cheerfulness, were I not certain that you would wish to bridle inordinate grief. We esteem you beyond living man. We have prospered under your ministrance and your instruction. You disregarded the terms of our original agreement. We were to labor for you the first year of our residence here, gratuitously; but you paid us to the uttermost—in lieu of giving us one hundred acres of land, you gave us three—instead of our erecting our houses and farm-buildings, you did it at your own cost, and with the debt allowed to be due to us, you stocked our farms with cattle, implements, and all that we required. You taught us the advantages of self-dependence, and the benefits of Christianity. Our disputes at one time were referred to you, but you instructed us to habituate ourselves to a disposition in judgment which would lead us to a proper estimate of our own errors. By adopting this advice, and by being mutually forbearing, we discovered that we soon remedied the evil by having no disagreements, and we began to taste the rich delight and happiness that is enjoyed by people who embrace the proper means to attain it. You encouraged us by precept and example, giving us cheer when all seemed gloomy and despairing. You were foremost in every benevolent action, and unflinching in every manful effort to assist us. In displaying our characters, you have unconsciously paid a tribute to your own worth—we are but the humble pupils of a master. You are the monarch of pioneers, and it needs only such moral tutors as you to make these clyssian fore-dwellings the most coveted of the earth."

The Major, with tears courting down his cheeks, arose to respond. His lips moved, but no sound was elicited. His friends seeing his state of excitement, with a relieved delivery withdrew almost imperceptibly from the banquet, and distributed themselves in the rooms open for the occasion. They were soon joined by the family, and all things resumed their wonted cheerfulness.

The agreeable manner and benevolent person of the Lieutenant, rendered him an object of much attraction among the younger ladies, and the evening was one of the most memorable to them that "Thanksgiving" had ever produced.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEPARTURE.

THE festivities of the day having passed away, it was indispensable to meet the sterner matters of life. The renewed indulgence to Captain Hewson would expire in a few days, when he would be required to join his regiment. The Lieutenant had also received a letter from Captain Perry, announcing his appointment to the *Jess* frigate, which could not be ready for sea before mid-summer; but strongly recommending the Lieutenant to join the lake service under Commodore Chumsey, on Lake Ontario, where the Government was endeavoring to concentrate detachments and energetic officers, as every attempt was to be made on those waters to bring the enemy into action, in the hope of accomplishing there a similar triumph to that attained on Lake Erie. The Lieutenant adopted at once the advice of Captain Perry, in the hope that he might be engaged in another splendid fight, and thus garnish his brows with the entwined glories of the upper and the lower lakes.

Captain Sinclair, who was still weak and disabled, looked these determinations with desultory feelings. He had every species of liberty, yet he was a prisoner on parole. He loved his country, yet he liked not her cause, and was not desirous of being exchanged; for, much as he abhorred inactivity, he had a still greater objection to draw his sword against his dearest friends—the preserver of his life, and the brother of Mary. He hoped that the late defeat of the British, and the European war in which she was engaged, might induce her to listen to amicable overtures, and that peace might be restored.

The perturbation of Laura was extreme. On a previous occasion, her tender heart had been deeply wounded at the departure of her brother for the seat of war; but now she had to battle with a double affliction. The navy called her lover—the army her brother—her country demanded both, and both had responded to her importunities. All, little thinking of

the wounds which they inflicted as they buckled on their swords. She used to listen with pleasure and gratification to the hunter, when he related anecdotes of the fearless character of the Lieutenant; but she now contemplated those tales with dread, as only calculated to plunge him into greater danger. In one of their walks, Laura took an opportunity of communicating her apprehensions to the Lieutenant:

"You will not think that I am treating you in a cowardly manner, my dear Edward, when I entreat you not to expose yourself needlessly to the merciless enemy. There is a valour which is less effective than cooler bravery in war. The one betrays the warrior at the onset; the other reserves him for many triumphs."

"Fear not," said the Lieutenant. "I will do my duty: and I wish to think that you would not reproach me, were I to do less. I once wished to die, and that bravely, in defence of my country; but your dear love has changed those notions, and I feel that I would rather live beneath the genial sunshine of your radiant smiles."

Laura was compelled to be satisfied with such playful assurances; but she felt a conviction that, although fearless, as was her brother, recklessness formed no part of his present disposition.

The day was now appointed for the departure of the guests. The hunter had proffered his gallantry on the journey, which it was arranged should be performed in the night. The gentlemen made their farewell calls, each being anxious to spend the last few days with the family.

The Lieutenant found the pain of the approaching separation from Laura to be greater than he imagined. He, however, concealed his bitter feelings, that the intensity of her sufferings might be assuaged; and he moreover flattered himself that he had given solace to Laura by expressing that an early union might be effected by the restoration of peace. She, for his encouragement, assumed to believe in what she thought to be falsehood. Unlike the flaming warrior, which displays his belated fury on his banner, these prophetic lovers, by adopting a calmness and placidity of manner, endeavored to hide the bitterness or disappointment which surged within their hearts. The sojourn of the Lieutenant

was now reduced to hours, and, passed with his dear Laura, they seemed short indeed. The day of departure arrived. Gloomy and dark was the hour of separation; but the morn was bright and the sky was cloudless, and although Nature had seen the track of their voyage, and beset that of the future, yet the lustre of her ethereal dominion was as ample and beauteous to the eye of man.

The family met in the breakfast-room at an early hour. Little was eaten, although the Major endeavored to rally the travelers by reminding them that the woods afforded few delicacies. The prostration fell upon them—of appetite they had none. At length the horses were led round. Their tread upon the gravel had warned Laura of the imminence of the moment. The family rose and retired, and the sweet delusion which they had so humanely practiced on each other, gave way at the moment of severest trial. Every sentiment of devotion which the heart can feel or the voice express, were interchanged between these devoted lovers, until Laura became aware that her feeble powers were failing her, when she exclaimed:

"Dearest Edward, leave me while I have strength to say farewell. All are in the library—see them there."

"My dearest Laura," replied the Lieutenant, "I will retire for a moment, that my last adieu may be to you, and that the last sound which meets my ear in this dwelling may be that of your sweet voice."

The Lieutenant entered the library. There this incomparable family had assembled. The Major, with a smile, and in an impressive manner said: "May God Almighty bless you and preserve you, for your own sake and for the sake of our dear child!" The Lieutenant then took an affectionate leave of the whole family, but not without considerable emotion on both sides; for the rumors of scenes of war to those engaged in it was not forgotten, although unspoken. He again entered the room where he had left Laura, whom he found in tears.

"Let me not regret, my dearest Laura," said the Lieutenant, "the necessity of thus separating. I respond to the call of honor and my country; and I will return to you, if not with additional fame, at least with undiminished reputation. The separation will not be lengthy, and my comfort will be

promoted by thinking that your distress of mind will soon be alleviated."

"I will restrain myself, under your assurances," replied Laura; "but, oh, Edward, temper your bravery with prudence, and do not forget that you hold the vital strings of two lives in your own heart."

The Lieutenant pressed her again to his heart, and they separated.

The travelers mounted their horses, and rode away from the avenue in silence. The party consisted of five horsemen. They were headed by the hunter, and followed by two attendants, who it was intended should return with the horses. They had ridden for some distance in a listless manner, when Captain Hewson reined in his horse and called the Lieutenant to come up with him, remarking:

"We are cheerless and listless companions. We must regulate our social habits in traversing the woods, or we shall arrive in camp the worse for the renovation we are supposed to have undergone."

"It is not possible," said the Lieutenant, "to detach my mind from the contemplation of so much that is sublime in those from whom we have now parted. The profound silence of the forest imparts such sweetness of thought, that we may be easily pardoned for the indulgence of our taciturnity."

Captain Hewson made no response, and they heartily again fell into single file and indulged in their own reveries, which may be likened to the revolution of an endless rope of thought, the same surface continually recurring. There was little disposition manifested by either party to dispel this quiet charm; from their departure from the Torrents to their arrival at Buffalo, this silent system was maintained.

Mounted, however, on good cattle, and under efficient guidance, their journey was performed in less time than was anticipated. The Lieutenant immediately sought his dispatches, and found that he was appointed to the command of a vessel under Commander Chesney, and he was requested to repair immediately to Stockton's Harbor, where several vessels were fitting for service. The Lieutenant made known these communications to Captain Hewson, from whom he learned that preparations were making to dispatch some of

the regiments into Canada, and he was named among the first. Both now bided themselves in writing home by the attendants who were to return with the horses, and the Lieutenant announced to Laura that he should join his appointment next day, although he did not imagine that active operations would commence earlier than the ensuing spring.

These momentous letters dispatched, he made arrangements for leaving; but no expectation could prevail upon the inexorable hunter to return with the horses. He had resolved to accompany the Lieutenant to his destination, and assigned, as an additional inducement, his desire to be the bearer of letters thence direct to Laura. Horses were procured, and, attended by the hunter, the Lieutenant soon reached Sackett's Harbor. There he was received with marked respect by both officers and men, for his reputation had preceded him, and the crew of the vessel to which he was appointed, were gratified at the privilege of acting under him. The worthy hunter remained two or three days, inspecting the ships and defences of this important arsenal, in order that he might be able to convey a minute detail of the position of matters to Laura. The Lieutenant wrote at great length, and assured her that there was little personal danger to himself, for he saw no probability, unless the harbor was attacked, of any chance to draw a sword for two or three months.

The offices of love fulfilled, and the hunter having departed, the Lieutenant took a most active part in preparing for the defence of the arsenal, and in devising means for the better health of the men, as the prevalence of an epidemic had kept one-half of the forces constantly on the sick-list. In these active occupations, he not only alleviated the sufferings of the afflicted and commanded their gratitude, but maintained his character on shore as a vigilant and efficient officer.

It was ascertained, through some deserters from the British camp, that the enemy were preparing for great efforts during the approaching spring, and every exertion was making to resist him on the lake. The service now assumed an importance which it had not hitherto done. It was determined to maintain the command of the lake, and the better to promote this, several ocean ships were laid up, and their officers and crews were transferred to this lake service. A bold, harry,

and dauntless marine had now assembled at Sackett's Harbor, and the operations of the ensuing season were anticipated with magnanimity. The spring arrived; the formidable masses of ice dissolved into their former element, and the Lieutenant was at sea. In the mean time, the enemy were not ignorant of these mighty preparations, and were correspondingly cautious, chiefly confining themselves to the protection of their harbors. Thus few opportunities occurred to the Lieutenant to signalize himself, except in his inexhaustible endeavors to render his crew efficient at the guns, and in every department of naval training.

The Commodore, a man of great bravery and resources, who now held undisputed rule on the lake, toward the end of the summer, accompanied by his squadron, in which was the Lieutenant, blockaded the British fleet in Kingston Harbor during six weeks, with the flags of defiance flying in the face of the enemy. Perceiving, however, that his force was larger than that of the foe, he ordered his superfluous ships to the offing, and on other service, that he might not be thought to invite the enemy to an unequal contest. Still believing that he had the advantage in force of his unusually superior antagonist, he directed the Lieutenant to send several of his guns on shore, and by this act of gallantry endeavored to modify his prowess to the strength of the enemy. The Lieutenant's eye flashed fire. He thought that such magnanimity, worthy of the renowned days of the Old, could not be realized by a valiant people. The British Commadore, fully estimating the elevation of mind which could dictate such conduct, but who was imperatively commanded not to fight unless compelled, after viewing the American fleet through a telescope from the deck of his vessel, so greatly felt the reproach in declining this dauntless challenge, that he suddenly seized the instrument to strike on the breast of a gun by which he was standing, and, in an agony of policy, rushed into his cabin.

Another treaty was yet to be concluded by the enemy. Commadore Chenery stood in toward Kingston, and brought to just within the drop of the shot from the batteries, and there the ships hoisted their ensigns, as a challenge to the enemy to come out. The English set their colors, but did not accept the defiance, and a few days after, the vessels left for Sackett's Harbor.

CHAPTER X.

THE FLIGHT AND THE ESCAPE.

THE Lieutenant, upon his return, became most anxious to hear from Laura, and had instituted inquiries to procure a competent courier to those distant wilds, when, to his astonishment and joy, the hunter appeared on the deck of his vessel. He explained that he had come down from Niagara, where he had delivered letters to Captain Hewson, and from whom he had learned that the whole Ontario fleet was congregated at the harbor, expecting to be attacked.

"I hastened on," continued he, "hoping to be in time to join you, and I find that I am here before the enemy."

The hunter was the bearer of two letters, one from Laura, and the other from her brother. The Lieutenant immediately excused himself to his worthy friend, and retired to his cabin, there to feast his heart upon the golden stream that flowed from the pen of his dearest Laura. He luxuriated over this letter for some time, forgetting, in this sublime reverie, both the messenger, and the letter which remained unopened from Captain Hewson. Arrested from this stupor of love by a sound on the door, he became aware of his inattention; but he was glad to learn, on inquiry, that the letter had been provided for. The summons that disturbed him, however, was from the Commodore, who was desirous of seeing him immediately. But before he obeyed this request, he perused the neglected letter from Laura's brother, which detailed some brilliant affairs on the Niagara frontier, in which he, notwithstanding his mobility on the subject, had evidently been a distinguished actor, upon the circumstances of his being advanced to the rank of Major.

With the great joy which Laura's letter had afforded to the Lieutenant's heart, and the pleasing intelligence of the promotion of her brother, he hastened to the Commodore. He received him courteously, as he ever did, and then said:

"I fear that I shall learn the circumstances of the feelings which inspire those smiles, Lieutenant Howard, by the stern and rapid orders incident to our profession."

"I am at all times prepared for any call of duty, sir," replied the Lieutenant.

"When could you put to sea again?" asked the Commodore, abruptly.

"With diligence, to-morrow," said the Lieutenant.

"Then," said the Commodore, "I must name to-morrow as your day of sailing. Since our arrival in port, I have received information of a character which makes it indispensable to watch sedulously the motions of the enemy. You have a fast ship, an admirable crew, good officers, and I am proud to testify that they have a commander worthy of them. It will be necessary to keep a steady eye on the harbours of the enemy, to observe what vessels leave them, and what are ready for sea; for I do confess that I am most anxious to engage these English, that Lake Ontario may share the honours of victory with those of Erie and Champlain. I know that you have no less ardor, although a hero of the upper lake, with envied laurels already won, and therefore it is that I intrust you with the task of watching the foe. In the prosecution of this duty, you may possibly meet vessels of the enemy cruising on the lake, and in reference to them I will not hamper you with directions; a brave man fights best when left to his own discretion."

The countenance of the Lieutenant displayed the greatest animation during the address of the worthy Commodore. The relaxation of the shore had no attraction for him: he preferred incessant occupation, and was eager to gain as much distinction as a victorious commander as he had as a valiant volunteer. Lorna, too, was intent upon his words, and although her letters abounded in timely rules for a warrior's guidance, still he knew how her heart would warm, could she but hear of the intrepidity and gallant actions of one whom she thus tutored.

"I feel highly honored, sir, by this confident preference," said the Lieutenant. "It will be an incentive to me, in the performance of my duty, to know that my conduct is not unremarked. With all speed I will prepare for sea, and I trust that when I return to port, it will not be so distant from you with my services."

"You have my unbounded commendation, Lieutenant Howard,"

said the Commodore; "but when you are prepared for sailing, report yourself personally to me."

The Lieutenant returned to his vessel, reported his orders to his first officer, and in a few minutes the ship was a scene of industry; and while the officers were shipping the necessary stores with the utmost diligence, the Lieutenant retired to his cabin, that he might pour out his feelings to Laura before his departure. But no sooner had he sat down, than he was disturbed. The lantern entered. The hurried orders for the ship to prepare again for sea were not long concealed from him, and he now appeared to offer his services on the expedition.

"No, no, Duncan," said the Lieutenant; "your offer I reject. Our complement of men will do for the service required, and you well know that there is a young lady at the Torrents who will expect you to return with some reply to the letter which she sent."

"I must go the cruise, sir," said Duncan. "There is a young man whom I well know, whom I can intrust with the letters, and he will deliver them as quickly as myself."

"Surely, Duncan," said the Lieutenant, very gravely, "you will not persevere in this notion. It is only a cruise of observation, and of course you can be of no use in an expedition of such a kind."

"There is often a vast difference between the intent and the event," said Duncan. "Now I feel, sir, that there is powder in this cruise—that there will be fighting, and I can not, must not, be denied a fair share of the honor."

"Well, Duncan," said the Lieutenant, with resignation, "I can not deny you any thing, or I would most certainly forbid this step. But if you are resolved to transfer my letter to other hands, I hope you will employ a trusty messenger."

"Could I not place your dispatches in hands as faithful as my own," said Duncan, with much feeling, "much as I desire to make this voyage, I would not do it at the risk of one hour's agony to Miss Laura."

The Lieutenant caught him by the hand, shook it heartily, and said:

"You are a faithful friend, good Duncan, and you like to share the danger into which you think that I am about to plunge; but, indeed, I do not anticipate any."

The Lieutenant then resumed his letter to Laura. He stated that he and her father would leave the harbor simultaneously; and that Dungen insisted upon accompanying him. He begged her to be happy, for that his cruise was dangerous, and even if he had the opportunity to meet an equal enemy, the armor of her love was sufficient to render his heart impregnable to the enemy's fire.

On the following morning, Mr. Ready, the chief officer, reported to the Lieutenant that the vessel was prepared for sea. He was a man of great energy and courage, and of untiring industry, and a patriot at heart. He was tall, handsome, and well-mannered; but his hair was tinged with the hue that indicates advancing years. His expression of countenance exhibited deep melancholy, and he was retired and eccentric in his habits, never indulging in conversation as a source of pleasure or amusement; but confining his thoughts wholly to the expression of his wants and the requirement of his duties. Yet with these morbid qualities, so rarely congenial to the free, noisy, and open-hearted sailor, this officer was esteemed by all the crew, and at his bidding they had worked with such readiness and good-will as to have astounded the Lieutenant at the rapidity of their proceedings. He well knew the value of his silent officer, and although he had been unsuccessful in every attempt to withdraw him from the moody solitude in which he indulged, he did not prize the less those qualities which suited him so well for the position that he held.

This prompt conduct of Mr. Ready enabled the Lieutenant to report himself to the Commandant at a much earlier hour than he had hoped, and, having received his final directions, and taken a farewell of the brother officers whom he left in port, he was soon standing out to sea, with a breeze most favorable for his purpose.

The Lieutenant steered directly across the lake, and, at daylight the following day, was looking into Kingston harbor. All was quiet. The same number of vessels that he had left there were quietly discharging on the wharves, but the large ship which they had been loading was now ready for sea. He then ran up the lake, nearly to the head of the navigable point, but, although he kept an unceasing lookout, not a sail

was described. Feeling additional confidence, but exercising no less vigilance, he coasted down the lake, keeping close to the Canada shore, hoping to fall in with some of the enemy's vessels, but he again came within sight of Kingston without better success. But here an alteration had taken place in his absence. There were two vessels less in the harbor than when he last was there. The inference was that they had either crossed to Sackett's Harbor on a visit of exploration, or they had gone up the lake to convoy down some store ships. In the former case the Commodore would see them; in the latter, the Lieutenant determined to make them his especial care, and, consequently, gave orders to "about ship," and steered boldly into the center of the lake. The gallant little vessel rushed through the waters, as if she partook the ardor of the mariners, and knew that she was upon a chase. The countenance of every man was brighter as he understood the object of their hate; but there was a ferocity, even in these smiles, which boded but little favor to those whom they were seeking.

The hunter stood upon the deck, watching the mass of canvas which graced the vessel, and listening to the creaking of the spars as the increasing breeze pressed her through the water, when the Lieutenant approached him.

"Well, Duncan," said he, "you are unusually thoughtful at such an exciting period when all are hopeful to meet the enemy."

"Yes, sir," responded the hunter; "we are rushing to destruction with light hearts, and the wind seems a little inclined to assist our wishes, for it is strengthening every minute."

"Why, my good friend," said the Lieutenant, smiling, "you must not philosophize on a day like this. It is not to destruction but to victory we are hastening. It is not a matter of personal hatred, but national obligation, and—"

At this juncture Mr. Reedy appeared, and the Lieutenant welcomed him by saying:

"You are doing admirably, Mr. Reedy; we are making ten knots. I was just reproaching my friend Duncan with a disposition to moralize before he assists in the battle, and to feel some hesitation whether, under these circumstances, we can afford him any appointment."

"Unless I am mistaken," said Reely, "he is one of those persons who need no further incentive to perform his duty than to be placed in front of the enemy, and I trust he will be in that position before to-morrow dawn."

"You are correct," said the Lieutenant, resuming a serious demeanor; "he is a brave man, Reely. He and I have before fought together."

The Hunter, however, had withdrawn himself, having been attracted by some other matter of interest, and the conversation was continued wholly in reference to important duties on hand.

"Now, Mr. Reely," said the Lieutenant, "we must keep in the center of the lake, and our vigilance must be increasing. I would not lose the honor of intercepting these vessels for my former reputation. My impression is that they followed us up the lake, and had we not hugged the coast too closely, we might have encountered them on our return."

"I have little doubt, sir," said Reely, "but that they are gone as convoy to some store-ships, supposing that our fleet is quietly refitting in Saklat's Harbor. The day is now closing; but I hope to see something of them in the morning. The eagerness and animation of the whole crew is beyond description. They burn to redeem themselves from the reproach which they imagine the victories of Eric and Christopher have cast upon them, and they think that the period to do so is when they are under the command of one of the heroes of the upper lake. I," continued Reely, his ordinary impassiveness warming into enthusiasm, "participate in their feelings. Let us meet the foe, let us boldly make his means of retreat impossible, by closing his wings, then board him, and let the battle be fought out by the courage and the power of the crew."

"It delights me to find such a spirit in my crew," said the Lieutenant, "and no opportunity shall be wanting to win renown that I can afford; but the wind increases, and I fear will soon blow a gale, and much is contingent upon the weather in naval engagements, for the silly Japanese has often deprived a brave man of the honors he was about to win, by rendering the sea, which he so capriciously governs, too rough and impracticable for victory."

"The wind increases slightly," replied Ready, "but I think it will moderate at midnight."

"Let all our eyes be watchful," said the Lieutenant, "and should we see the enemy, the elements, be they ever so hostile, shall not keep us wholly from the foe."

The officer left to attend to the requirements of the ship, and the Lieutenant retired within the privacy of his cabin. There his thoughts reverted to that retreat of happiness and peace where dwelt his faithful Laura. He sighed as he compared their occupations: he chiding his fellow-men that he might slay him as the enemy of his country—Laura teaching to the children of her school those virtues of which love to their kindred was the most imperative. Yet the gallant ship sailed on with the flooring breeze, and, as the Lieutenant reached forward to incense his principles in behalf of Laura, who was betrothed to that red head, raised her eyes to heaven, and supplicated that men might be less unparrying toward his brother.

The Lieutenant retired to his berth about midnight for a few hours; but the officer and the hunter preferred the deck. Mr. Ready had attached himself to the hunter; that is, he had spoken to him very frequently, a thing of rare occurrence, and now, when both were indisposed to sleep, although the hour was after midnight, they paced the deck together. At length Ready said:

"Do you think, friend Hunter, that man, unaffected by bodily illness, is ever forewarned of coming dissolution?"

"For my own part," replied Daneen, "I think not, or many men might avoid death by the exercise of the slightest prudence."

"That case is open to exception," said Ready; "for do you believe that if I were certain to be killed in the battle that is likely to ensue, I would avoid the foe, and submit to be retired to as the coward who ran, instead of the warrior who fell?"

"But what makes you anxious to ask this question, so hidden in mystery as the subject is?" asked the hunter.

"Because," replied Ready, "I am admonished that I shall die in the coming battle. It has been revealed to me in the visions of the night, and confirmed to me in the circumstances

of the day, and by that revolution which is effected in my own mind. I am in health, in energy of mind, yet I feel more like the dying than the living man. I have lived an eventful but not a criminal life; but I have seen integrity of the deepest dye, which I was too powerless to protect, nay, which, in my ignorance of its being guilt at all, I assisted in making blacker."

"Be comforted, my friend," said the hunter, "these are but hallucinations of the brain. I once had such dark thoughts, but they passed away with returning health."

"Hallucinations! good hunter," said the officer, in wonder; "why, they are revelations; but I find that you are beyond conviction, as are many who are unpractical. But let it pass. One favor I will venture to ask: should I die, let not the enemy seize upon my body. It is sacred to a use—to a sepulcher which is named among these papers which are in my possession. May I rely on you?"

"Implicitly, most implicitly," said the hunter; "should you fall and I survive, every wish that you have uttered shall be fulfilled."

The chief officer thanked him profoundly, and they continued to pace the deck, sometimes in conversation, sometimes in deep thought, until those luminous fogs appeared in the eastern hemisphere which announced the approach of the monarch of the day. This slight evidence of decreasing darkness attracted the officer to the look-out; as soon as the haze had cleared, a sail was perceived ahead.

The Lieutenant was instantly on deck, and, when the increasing light had afforded more distinct views in the horizon, five sail were distinguished; but it was thought by their trim that only the two larger were vessels of war. Boldly forgetting his visions and revelations, and, with an energy which an hour earlier it would not have been imagined had existed in such a prostrate man, he waved his sword in the air, and electrified the crew by crying:

"To the guns, brave boys, to the guns! we have them now!"

The deck was cleared of useless articles, the guns were manned, and every preparation made: but when this exciting bustle was over, a pause ensued, painful to some, but not to

all, for as a few lifted their hands to heaven and prayed for mercy to themselves and protection to the little ones at home, the majority stood impatient for the commencement of the fray. The Lieutenant, Ready, and the hunter stood looking toward the enemy. He displayed undiminished bravery, and could be seen making preparations equal to themselves. There were two vessels, but they were rather smaller and carried lighter guns; yet the Lieutenant felt that the enemy had the advantage in strength. The weather was still unfavorable. The wind had ceased a little; but the sea was rather heavy, evidently unfavorable for victory to either; but that did not lessen the exultation of hope to both. On came the belligerents, their iron guns frowning on each other, till the Lieutenant sent a ball toward his opponent's to measure his distance. It fell but little short. The convoy were three vessels in the wake of their protectors. They were wholly unarmed, except as they might contain the elements of war as stores. The Lieutenant had one advantage—he had got to windward of his adversaries, and now that they had approached sufficiently near to be destructive, the Lieutenant, with all his available guns, poured in a broadside to the foremost enemy. It was well directed, and had much effect. Her foremast was struck, and she seemed somewhat crippled; but she responded, though her reply was harmless. Broad-sides were current, but the undulatory motion of the waves prevented either being very effective. Had the weather been fine, the enemy would in all probability have become an easy prey to such an intrepid crew as that of the Lieutenant, but the uncontrollable aim and ineffectiveness of the guns was plainly in favor of the lighter vessels. The vessel which had been injured by the first fire of the Lieutenant, now received two or three other hits which rendered her difficult to manage, and the Lieutenant determined to attempt her capture as soon as he was able; but her consort, who had escaped with impunity, was all activity. She had twice delivered a broadside at the bow of the Lieutenant's vessel in the last of which a large swivel-gun had been rendered useless. These two successful manœuvres gave her confidence, but it made the Lieutenant wary; and when she again attempted to practice this skill in seamanship, he was

prepared, and presenting his broadside to the enemy, delivered such a fire as made her spars fly in every direction, and the vessel took refuge to the leeward of her crippled consort.

In the mean time, the storeships, seeing all parties fully engaged in a conflict for which they were not armed, quickly dropped off toward the Canada shore, satisfied that the rubber game would amuse the Lieutenant; but they were unacquainted with the eagle eye of the naval hero, nor were aware of his jealousy of being outmanœuvred, and the Captain of the foremost vessel was astounded when a gentle indication, in the shape of a twenty-four pounder, intended to pass athwart his bow, carried away his mainmast, and thus brought his hopes of liberty to a close. His companions, wisely profiting by the example, took in sail, and awaited in patient inactivity the result of the pending fight. But — whether by accident or design was never known — the vessel thus struck was soon discovered to be on fire. Some slight attempt seemed to have been made to extinguish the flames, and then, in affected or real consternation, the crew took to the boats and hastened from the burning vessel. Hostilities were suspended while all gazed upon the raging element as it devoured the ship, when suddenly the vessel gave a heave as if it were the last throeb of a violent convulsion, and in a moment the deck and the whole fiery bowels of the ship were hurled into the air, where continued explosions occurred, and whence grape, canister and larger shot were showered down upon the belligerent ships, almost halting the fleets in metal, and creating in the surrounding waters a storm-like condition. The vessel was laden with various commodities, which she was conveying to Kingston; but she was destroyed by her own countrymen, and in a few minutes, the only evidence of her existence was the burning hulk which floated upon the surface of the water.

The prize which had been caused in the hostile efforts of the rival vessels was now ended, and the struggle recommenced. The Lieutenant, in spite of the weather, which, however, had somewhat moderated, determined to board the vessel he had first struck, and for that purpose he gradually moved her, firing upon her, but with little effect, during his approach. He succeeded in taking himself to the enemy's vessel, and

then came the terrible order to board. Pikes, pistols, swords, and every other offensive weapon were employed upon this occasion, and the crews faced each other in savage ferocity. This hand-to-hand fight, however, was the chief officer's favorite termination to a ~~sea~~ engagement, and he now leaped forward with the most fearless and desperate resolution. There were numbers to second him, and as there seemed no lack of courage in their opponents, the battle raged with great determination. The clashing of the steel weapons, the discharge of the fire-arms, the coarse voices and rude oaths of the men, and the cheers of victory where no conquest was made, together with the occasional agonizing shrieks of a victim as the sword grated through his body toward his heart, were such as none could hear unsaddened, unless he were one of those engaged in the terrible carnage, and who shared the feelings of this wolf-like contest.

The resistance was more stubborn than the Lieutenant had contemplated. There were a few marines on each of the store-ships, all of whom had been cleverly conveyed to the threatened vessel; and he felt this, the second ship seeing the danger of her consort, had come to her relief, thrown more than half her crew on board, and by these detachments had strengthened the enemy beyond all calculations, and had made his deck quite a field of strength. However, superior valor might outweigh superior numbers; but there was another source of anxiety which he had no power to remove—the uneasy elements. He was fearful that the ships might separate, and thus leave the boarders for a time without retreat, in case their desperate courage were defeated. But he dared not stay longer to guard this point—every man was wanted, and he, with a few others whom he had reserved, threw themselves forward. This little reinforcement gave new vigor to the band, and they had now gained half the enemy's deck. They gave three cheers at the achievement, but at this crisis, the chief officer, Ready, who had been foremost in the fight, whose bravery urged his men to deeds of valor which surprised themselves, fell from a sword wound, and his assailant advanced to deliver a more deadly thrust, when the Lieutenant stepped forward and reversed the fall of his friend by felling the enemy to the deck. He had

saved poor Ready from immediate death, but he had received the wound of which his visions told. He was quite sensible, and saw the performance of the Lieutenant, and grasping his hand and exclaiming, "I am well as usual," his eyes closed, and the Lieutenant gave directions for his immediate removal.

The fighting was wholly confined to the enemy's ship, and as the Lieutenant and his party slowly advanced, they were greatly impeded by the dead and wounded. The fall of his chief officer was mainly caused by his humane endeavor to remove a wounded partisan, and when the Lieutenant was about to direct one or two to withdraw from the combat and assist their wounded brethren, the hunter, with some little anxiety in his face, made his way to the spot where his commander stood, and whispering something in his ear, the Lieutenant anxiously scanned the horizon, and became alarmed. Success was almost in view—more than one-half the enemy's deck was theirs, and the men were as desperate and more resolved on victory than ever; still the warning eye of the hunter and the yet more nautical one of the Lieutenant saw that warning of danger in the distance, which might convert a conquest into their own destruction. The struggle was great in the young warrior's heart; but he mastered his repugnance to retreat, and with a sigh, he exclaimed:

"It is so, Duncan. Even with victory within our grasp, we must retreat or we are lost. Withdraw our men gradually to the ship. Do it by gesture—use no words—that the enemy may be unconscious of our intention, and our bold fellows will imagine that we are practicing some wily stratagem or ambuscade."

With difficulty these leaders induced the men to yield the ground which they had with such difficulty and bravery won; but they were followed with such eagerness by the enemy, that when the ships again parted, it was discovered that two of his hands were on board the Lieutenant's ship, and were now his prisoners. The chagrin of these valiant men at arms at their ludicrous and forlorn position, as they recoiled from their cheering friends, was the cause of much diversion to their rivals; but the Lieutenant instantly ordered all the canvas that his vessel could carry to be set on foot, and then it was that the crew discovered the position of their foe,

which they had so recently seen in Kingston harbor, accompanied by two others, hastening to the rescue of their imperiled friends.

With the speed of lightning, the Lieutenant's loyal little bark was soon dashing through the waters of the lake. The vessels in the distance evidently saw his maneuver—saw him quit his prey—and they now prepared to intercept his flight. This the Lieutenant saw they had power to do while light prevailed; he therefore ran up the lake, and hoped when darkness might favor such an attempt, to retrace his course, keeping closer to the Canadian shore, where he might not be suspected, and thus evade the vigilance and vengeance which menaced him. The enemy, as if suspecting his device, followed him surely, keeping him well in sight. Night came—it was intensely dark—just such a night as he wanted for his purpose—the wind was fresh and inclined to be fitful. He boldly crossed the lake and ran down it on the Canada shore. He took every precaution on this daring errand—remained on deck all night—set double watches—and had the advantage of the eye and ear of the gallant hunter, whose wariness seemed doubly sagacious by sea or land. Thus defended from surprise, he sailed safely through the enemy's waters, and at the dawn of day had again reached Kingston. Into this harbor he had the audacity to peep, when he discovered that he was correct in his conjecture—the large vessel was absent together with two others. To attempt to make Sackett's Harbor in face of such danger would have been madness. He therefore dropped down to the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and anchoring in a little bay on the lee of Wolf Island, there he remained hidden from view all day. During the progress of these events, poor Reely was in the greatest agony, which, however, he endured with marvelous patience. His wounds were so severe, that it was feared they would prove fatal. There was, unfortunately, no surgeon on board, and the only advice they could obtain of a nature approaching to medical knowledge, was from a surgeon's mate—a scion of the enemy—one of those luckless ten who layed within the American lines when the vessels dismasted. In the ardor of his feelings he had neglected the duties of his profession, and applied himself to the stern arts of war, and in his efforts to be

early in the arms of victory, had fallen into those of despondency. The youthful Galen dressed poor Ready's wounds, and administered the needed medicines; but gave his opinion that the wounds were fatal, although the patient might linger some days. Both the Lieutenant and the hunter did all they could to alleviate the sufferings of poor Ready; one of them was mostly at his side, and he, who had been so retiring and so fond of solitude, now seemed grateful for their society. He was inquisitive to learn every event that occurred on board the vessel. Her passage down the lake was one of intense interest to him, and he once or twice requested messages to be conveyed to the men, imploring them to perform their duty to their commander and to the service. He exulted at the manner in which the Lieutenant was disappointing the vengeance of the enemy, and forecast the success of a stratagem so well planned and so dextrously managed.

"Ah, friend hunter," said Ready, as the ship rode at anchor near Wolf Island, and Duncan sat beside the wounded officer, "that poor prisoner boy is right. I never shall recover from my wounds. I made him speak plainly to-day, and that is his full verdict. I knew that something potent was lying upon those thoughts of mine, and often, when thinking intently, have I seen the means by which I should meet my death. It is a retributive punishment. The first blood I shed—the first life that yielded to my rage—was upon the ocean, and in boarling. Of late it was revealed to me that I should die in the manner that I had first taken human life. I knew not him whom I slew—he was no enemy of mine—but he felt as I fearfully stood forth to defend a friend whom I would save again, even with the penalty of this sin upon my soul. Still, although to me that friend was not of my species, yet the cause which he maintained was alien to man's nature—the men with whom he connected were a curse upon the ocean; but I was innocent of that knowledge when I shed that blood. Since that event, many, many years have passed—the sweetest happiness and the bitterest sorrows have alternately influenced my soul; but neither the pleasure nor the pains of life have driven from my heart the remembrance of that dying man. Vengeance is his right—rather give it to the mighty floods when you hunt, or to the deep and boundless

ings which I have planned—you can not avoid remorse—atonement must be made.”

At this period the officer became so affected and excited, that the hunter, under the pretence of summoning the surgeon, quitted his poor friend, for whom he felt considerable sympathy.

Night had now ensued, and the Lieutenant had ceased the vigilance of the enemy. He was still supposed to be up the lake, for it was not imagined that he would have the daring to run down upon the enemy's coast, in the face of such a superior force. About ten o'clock, therefore, he weighed anchor. The night was dark, and although the wind had been quiet during the day, it freshened at sundown and now blew steadily. For three hours the Lieutenant coasted along. He knew the coast, but he had the precaution to keep the land continually gained. He now approached a more dangerous portion of the voyage—not that the navigation was more intricate; but as he advanced toward Sackett's Harbor, he had to fear the watchfulness of the enemy, who, he doubted not, was awaiting him there. He ordered the most perfect tranquillity. Not a word was spoken, and so profound was the quietude, that it was painful to listen even to the rippling of the water, as it was displaced by the progress of the gallant little bark, or the occasional flapping of a sail, as the fatal breeze died away and then resumed its force. Every eye and ear was intensely on the alert. The Lieutenant stood upon the quarter-deck, and the hunter had placed himself in the prow of the vessel. Suddenly a momentary flash of light was seen, and the rolling thunder of a gun sounded in the air. All became startled and alarmed, and the Lieutenant feared that he was detected, and that the report was from the gun of the great *St. Lawrence*, aimed at him; but the hunter had seen more. The flash had exhibited to his keen eye the dark outline of the military ship in repose upon the bosom of the lake. He also felt assured that they were unseen, as the gun was fired to seaward, and the flash disclosed a small vessel apparently beating its way up the lake, which quickly responded to the challenge by another shot, smaller, but not understood by friends than enemies. But this circumstance was beautifully timed to suit the emergency of the Lieutenant,

for the light had revealed to the hunter that they were steering in a course precisely in a line with the point where the large vessel was anchored. The hunter rushed on, hastily explained to the Lieutenant what he had remarked, and that officer, enshrouded in darkness, but knowing well the meriting fidelities of his friend, at once altered the course of his ship, and thus an event which seemed to the Lieutenant disastrous to his liberty was converted, by the vigilance employed, into the means of succor. It was evident now that they were approaching the harbor, and that they had stolen within the line of the blockading squadron, who had expected him from an entirely opposite point. The Lieutenant now felt comparatively safe; still, the same caution was preserved, until, at three o'clock in the morning, beneath the mask of darkness, the Lieutenant announced his arrival in Sackett's Harbor by the ordinary salute, which no doubt fell with reproach upon the enemy's ears.

The Commadore received the Lieutenant with open arms. He had little doubt but that he had been captured. He had heard the firing upon the lake; but he knew that the *St. Lawrence* was cruising with the fleet, and as this ship carried one hundred and ten guns, manned by a thousand men, and was alone larger than the whole American navy on Lake Ontario, he did not feel justified in acting against such a disproportionate force. The Commadore highly complimented the Lieutenant upon his judiciousness and bravery, and so deeply lamented the fall of poor Reely, that he immediately sent his own surgeon to attend him.

"He is an admirable officer," he remarked to the Lieutenant, "notwithstanding that misfortune of falling. He has told me that his life has been one of adventure, and I trust that it has not been one of crime also."

Immediately after the Lieutenant returned from the Commadore, he sought an interview with the surgeon, who had just attended Reely, from whom he learned that it was quite impossible that he could exist more than a day or two. He said that Reely, whom he had known some time, had particularly requested him to state to him the truth, and in the desire to relieve him, the Lieutenant, from the painful day, he had acknowledged to him that he must prepare for death.

While the Lieutenant was engaged with the doctor, a request was delivered from Realy that he would visit him as soon as the more pressing duties of the ship would allow, and the Lieutenant, having given some instructions that were indispensable, hastened to the cabin of his friend.

"My worthy sir," exclaimed Realy, as the Lieutenant entered the cabin of the dying man, "my doom is certain—I am to die—I have elicited so much from the doctor. The inevitable conqueror of man demands his tribute of me as he has done from all others of my race, of whom I am the last. The influence of death is now upon me. I feel that my breath shortens, and there is a numbness in my limbs. But as I live on earth a lonely man, death is more welcome to me than extended life. I once had a wife—a child—both supreme blessings. For them I abandoned the sea—we could not bear the separation of a voyage. We lived in the woods amid the charms of nature. I built a hut. I planted corn, and in this manner, and with the pleasures of hunting, our humble wants were fed. Love was our enjoyment, and for four years we pursued it in this secluded wilderness. Then came sickness and death. I lost my wife and child. I will not tell you the agonies it cost my devoted heart, thus to be emptied of its solace. My hut became their repelcher, and I wish it to be mine. I wish my ashes to mix with those of the dear partners whom I loved so well. Deep in the forest lies this grave, which was once my home; but my heart clings to it. Lieutenant Howard, we are brother sailors—we have fought together. May I ask that you will place my poor remains beside those of my dear wife and child? I have ample wealth for all the purposes of conveyance. I ask not your personal attendance—your duties preclude that; but allow the noble hunter, who is qualified for the service, to guide the way, and he will be faithful to the trust."

The Lieutenant did not hesitate; but he was alarmed to perceive the alteration which the inordinate excitement of the officer had produced. He placed his hand upon that of Realy and looking him kindly in the face, replied:

"Can your fellow, my dear friend, and I pledge my honor that all your wishes shall be faithfully performed?"

A flash of joy passed over the face of the officer as he heard this pledge issue from the mouth of the Lieutenant, and who at the same time felt a slight pressure of the hand; but in the silent expression of his gratitude, the poor officer had passed into eternity. He died beneath the overpowering feeling of this last hope of life.

The Lieutenant was deeply affected. He retired immediately to his cabin, and was some time composing his agitated mind, and while he sat thus contemplating the scene of the last hour, the hunter entered the cabin.

"Ah, Daneen," he said, "this is a dreadful occurrence. I have assured poor Realy that his body should repose with that of his wife, who is buried in the forest; but he was not permitted to reveal to me the situation of the grave, so that it is not possible for me to comply with the request, under the pleasure and satisfaction of which he sank into death. It is most painful, Daneen, but what can be done?"

"I can release you from that distress," replied the hunter. "Mr. Realy described the place to me, and although lonely and distant, I know something of the locality. I will undertake the duties incumbent upon your promise, and doubt not but that I shall reach the place."

This declaration afforded considerable happiness to the Lieutenant, and on the following morning the vigorous form of the hunter was seen proceeding on a train, with the coffin of poor Realy, marching toward the forest.

Surmounting difficulties almost fatal to the present age: sometimes conveying the body of which he was the usual guardian upon ox-carts; sometimes by lighter and more speedy vehicles; then propelling upon white men to assist him in bearing it, and again, including, by Indian rogues, the more superstitious and disinclined Indians to bear him, their aid—this undaunted man reached the Mouth of his pilgrimage. There stood the Kite hut, now so isolated in the mountains that once grazed and perfumed this happy dwelling. But the hunter had to cut with his ax an entrance to the door—a proof that none had entered those sacred precincts since it had been used as a residence. He entered the gloomy room; upon the floor was a large, thick skin of seal, upon which were letters deeply carved with this inscription:

"Sacred to Annie Reely, and Annie, her child. Traveler, pioneer, or sower, as you love your wives and children, and the memory of the dead, let this sepulcher and little clearing remain in honor of those who are here interred." The hunter took up the slab, dug into the earth, and when he had reached the coffin, he placed that of Reely beside his wife, and as he looked up from that dark grave into the light, his vision seemed brighter, the heavens more glorious than before. His soul expanded in grateful satisfaction as he recalled to the wives of the dying man, and their accomplishment. He replaced the slab, and added to the names upon it that of "Amrose Reely, husband and father, who fell in his country's battles," without thinking that he was creating a greater monument to his own philanthropy than to his poor friend's memory. The hunter remained in this hallowed place many days, during which he repaired the house, uprooted the brambles around the little hut, and then inscribed upon its door, "Within is buried a soldier, who fell in his country's cause, but who was brought here to be interred with his wife and child," he quitted the spot, leaving to the feelings of those who read this powerful interdict, whether they could convert this sepulcher to other uses.

CHAPTER XI.

PEACE.

ON Lake Ontario the cruise of the American fleet was ended for the season, from the period that the large two-decker, called the *St. Lawrence*, had so nearly intercepted the Lieutenant's vessel. She was a monster on those waters, but had not a courage equal to her prowess, for formidable as she was in size, and weight of metal, she would not venture into St. Lawrence's Harbor. The Commander was too prudent to attack this Leviathan; but, fearing an assault upon the ground, retained all his fleet in port, and forming them under the batteries, these floating vessels awaited the attack of the mighty

St. Lawrence and her attendant fleet. The enemy came zig-zag, but seemed fully occupied in insuring the security of his positions, without attempting new conquests.

At a short distance from the Commodore's flag could be distinguished the Lieutenant's vessel, with its teeth to seaward, impatiently defying the unequal fight. He well knew the superior training of his men, and that their mood was as staunch as the guns to which they were devoted. But the enemy would not step in, and the Commodore, equally cautious, would not step out; and in this state of suspense they continued, until an obstruction intervened, too formidable for naval strife—the ice of winter. The interposition of this element divided the belligerents, and the fighting soon closed without any other feature than the daring manner in which the navy had sustained its honor in these waters, in defying the enemy, and the spirited encounter of the Lieutenant with the two brigs and the transports.

The Lieutenant availed himself of the earliest opportunity that he could release himself from his duties, to visit Major Hewson, who still remained with the army on the Niagara frontier, not only to congratulate him on his achievements and his promotion, but to indulge in the pleasure of personal communication, and one so closely allied to his beloved Laura. While the enemy, therefore, was inactive, and no apprehension was indulged of any immediate attack on Sacket's Harbor, he obtained leave of a short absence, and hastened to the Major's quarters at Buffalo. They met in delight. The *Torrens* were reverted to, as a place from which they were to continue affairs; for both agreed that the most vigorous look-out was required against their alert and unscrupulous foe. Notwithstanding the intense desire of the Lieutenant to visit Laura, from whom he had been separated so long, he was compelled to abandon this feeling to the paramount claims of duty. It was known, however, that negotiations for peace were pending, and it was thought not to be impossible that, as England had suffered in reputation, morally and physically, in this unjust war, she would be more temporizing in her policy.

The Lieutenant, after remaining two days with his friend, returned to his command, where he found all in security.

The disease under which the sailors were laboring was somewhat abated, which was attributed to the rigor of the weather, but was most satisfactory to the officer:

The most dreary portion of the winter had passed away, and the Commodore, usually very slight, had hinted to the officers that they might prepare for great activity as soon as they could get adrift, when it was suddenly announced that peace had been concluded, and that there was no farther necessity for the powerful naval and military armaments now congregated on the waters of Lake Ontario. The lovers of fighting were eminently chagrined at this margin between them and their glory, and although the Lieutenant was certainly of opinion that he had added but few laurels to the chaplet of his fame by his career in the last year, still he had more consolation than many who were more favorably situated, for he should be restored to the society of his beloved Laura. The Commodore expressed no dissatisfaction at the intelligence, although it was believed he was not content. The Lieutenant, however, when in private, introduced the subject, when he replied:

"It is wrong to think that slaughter is indispensable to renown; nor can he be judged inferior who has been unable to fight the enemy. While we, for instance, were as powerful as he, we swept the lake from shore to shore, and followed him to his bar; and when we discerned that our enemy was feeble as to power, we sent away several ships, and landed many guns—a challenge significant enough; but the enemy still reposed in Kingston, behind the batteries of the harbor. It is true that the more injury a commander inflicts upon the enemy, the more benefit he does his country, and, consequently, his own reputation; but be assured that neither married men nor the nation will deny a medal of celebrity to those who, by every practicable means, endeavored to engage the foe. No, no, my dear fellow; our honor is unblemished, though the ships of our antagonist remain unbattered."

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN.

As the forest trees, warmed by the gentle sun, and fanned by the gentle breeze of the southern wind, began to disclose their luscious greens, two horsemen were hurrying along slowly side by side along the open woods. A short distance in front rode a taller and more muscular man, armed with a rifle. Their faces were suffused with smiles, and they seemed engaged in careless conversation. They were the now Major Howard and the Lieutenant, who were returning from the war to the peaceful abode at the Torrents.

"We can not reach home until to-morrow," said the Major; "but, alas! I have no virgins, no women at whom I can bestow these inspiring trophies of my prowess—the scalps of those whom I have slain in battle."

"But, being destitute of the coveted scalps," observed the Lieutenant, "would it not be well to offer to the walls of the settlement those rocking monuments of a husband's courage; or you might assimilate the barbarities of the Indians with those of the present age, and enter the place of your nativity with your vanquished foes chained to your chariot-wheels, and the scalps of the slain proudly displayed around your legs, provided by a few arrows slung in the javelin hand?"

"A most dainty portrait, truly," responded the Major. "A style of modern martial and grandiloquent, but of doubtful fitness in a Christian hero who is returning from the wars of his country, where the fight has been for liberty."

"Certainly a Christian hero would dispose with some of the more savage emblems of his bravery," continued the Lieutenant; "although, like his barbarian in the village—frenzies of his people; but in your case, most worthy consideration, would it not be more gratifying to the hearts of those devoted parents, to those dear and well-loved sisters, and more compatible with the simple habits of that virtuous community of which you are a member, to meet you as they parted from you—as the son, the brother, and the friend whom they love so well?"

"Profound philosophy, then student of humanity," replied the Major. "I stand convinced; I—Ho, ho! then worthy Donald, in my noble guide, and trusty herald, is there danger in that path? Doth an enemy approach? If so, declare, in chosen voice, that a mighty hero of the earth, and a still mightier hero of the sea, travelth this way, and are alone a match against a legion of either element."

The hunter had reined in his horse, and his keen eye scanned intent on some distant object that had attracted his attention; but his rifle was not upraised. The friends soon came up with him, and gazing in the same direction, Major Hewson exclaimed:

"Is it possible! my noble father!" and with the speed of lightning he dashed on, followed by the Lieutenant and the hunter.

It was really the venerable Major who had been caught by the hunter at a considerable distance in the forest. He had been exceedingly concerned at the prolonged absence of his son, for nearly a month had elapsed since the hunter had left the Terrants with the horses, and he had consequently determined to proceed to Buffalo for intelligence. He was accompanied by three of his old military friends of the regiment, and by two attendants. The meeting between the father and the son was affecting, and the former seemed impressed with deep thankfulness that his only son was returned to him in safety, in honor, and advanced in military rank. The Major, separating himself from his son, passed on to the Lieutenant and the hunter, sincerely rejoiced to see them, and saying to the former that the ladies were most anxious for his presence.

This happy party conversed themselves most fortunate in meeting each other in the intricacies of the wilderness; but Captain Hewson deeply regretted the necessity for his father to remain a night in the woods. The Major, however, comforted himself on evening with so mild a pneumonia, as he had gained home under the impression that he should pass many nights beneath the arduous canopies of the forest. It was now agreed that they should bivouac at a favorable spot at the hunter's, which could be reached in half an hour's ride. The place was soon reached, and was found to be thickly covered with trees. The little encampment was formed, the

horses secured, a bright fire kindled, provisions cooked, and the wood rung with the hilarity and cheer of those delighted friends—so much attached and so long separated. The two Majors were reclining on the turf slightly apart from the rest, when the hunter, touching the elbow of the Lieutenant, and pointing to them, remarked:

"I have been thinking of the two Majors—father and son. What a happy picture they afford there—the one so satisfied with his worthy son, the other so justly proud of his noble father. I can not tell you how much I enjoy this day. There is only one other circumstance will touch the feelings of my heart like this—your marriage with Laura."

He awaited no reply, but moved toward the entrance.

On the following morning, before the sun had appeared in the horizon, the party was in the saddle. The desire to reach the Torrents was to some inseparable, and to others the dormant accommodation was not so volupuous as to induce more sleep than the body needed. These influences urged them to an early start, and under expert guidance, and prosecuting the journey with diligence, they found, about two hours after noon, that the Major's house was within view. The Lieutenant could scarcely control himself from starting past the party, so intense was his anxiety to meet Laura; but, fortunately, neither of the Majors were disposed to move slowly, and the sagacious horses, knowing the locality, and being eager to regain their stables, a unity of action was produced, which yielded a rapid advance, and they soon arrived at the hospitable door.

In an instant, the Lieutenant and his friend were dismounted. Mrs. Hewson and Mary rushed toward the younger Major, and the Lieutenant encountered Laura, as she was about to quit the drawing-room. He called her to his house. It is impossible to describe the supreme delight of the moment. A year of solicitude was well repaid by the expression and angelic feelings which entered the pure heart of the devoted Laura. It seemed to her as if he whom she had married so long was now restored from the dead; and the Lieutenant felt that this was the only victory that merited his own acclamation. But it was only for those delicious moments that others were forgotten; he turned to Mrs. Hewson and

Mary, and exchanged with them the greetings of dear and valued friends. Happiness and satisfaction reigned paramount, and the old and companion, who could not so violate the strictness of hospitality as to withdraw, partook of the general joy. The rally hunter was highly exhilarated at the pleasure he saw manifest, and which all avowed he had been instrumental in promoting. After they had partaken of an early supper, the evening was passed in mirth and gladness, and the jolly settlers did not leave this friendly mansion with near the willingness with which they had risen from their grassy pillows in the morning.

The next day the inhabitants thronged to the house to see the new Major, many of them introducing their ruby-faced daughters, whom the Major saluted with the affection of a long-absent brother. They welcomed the Lieutenant also, who was equally rejoiced to see them, although he testified his joy to the young ladies in a different manner to that of his more privileged friend. War was the topic of conversation, although peace was the essence of the enjoyment, and the Lieutenant greatly interested his hearers by describing the gallant affair in which Captain Hewson had won his majority, to whom the reputation of one of the most splendid assaults on the Niagara frontier was indisputably due. These inquisitive recourses next reverted to the naval operations on Lake Ontario, and here the new Major took the initiative, and related how the Commodore, in conjunction with the Lieutenant, had swept the lake of the British fleet, which, taking refuge in Kingston harbor, was there blockaded for many weeks by the American squadron; how, perceiving their advantage in power over the haughty foe, to equalize their forces, had sent away their superabundant ships; but finding still the enemy too coy, they made another generous effort to entice him from his stronghold, by disposing with a number of their vessels, which they took from the vessels and landed on the shore; but his tactics seemed still unaltered, and he remained in security under the protection of the guns of the fort. The listeners were much pleased at the knight-errantry of the adventure, so worthy of the deeds of former times, and suggested that the presence of the enemy might be better indicated by the use of a term not by any means flattering to their naval

reputation. The Major, however, with a professional lover that could not allow him to be to an enemy, explained that the English Commander was a brave and able commander, but that he was inhibited from fighting by imperative restrictions from his Government. He then pursued his theme, and humorously narrated how that the national wealth of the opulent British nation had been impaired to the extent of a spy-glass, in consequence of Sir John Yeo having dashed one to atoms on a gun-breech, in a moment of excitement, when he saw the defiant temper of the American Commander, and yet was restrained by indisputable orders not to engage the enemy. This related occasioned much amusement, and the soldiers regretted that a victory on Lake Ontario could not be added to those glorious conquests on Lakes Erie and Champlain.

The Major, who had, on the day of the arrival of his son and the Lieutenant, invited all the inhabitants to his home on the following evening, to the popular meal of supper, now reminded them not to fail in their engagements, which they promised to respect, and soon after departed.

The day was passed in the delightful interchange of affection and conversation, so pleasing to those long separated, especially when one or two had just escaped from the terrible dangers incidental to a warrior's career.

Captain Sinclair, who had now wholly recovered from his wounds, was in great exultation at the proclamation of peace. He was no longer the hostile fiend—he no longer hid as an enemy in the camp; but was as one solemnly restored to life. He was also released from his parole, although he still remained a prisoner of war, as viewed to the warring armies of the powerful May, whose gentle kindness had changed his dreary bondage to a fairy life.

With the evening came the resolution to celebrate the return of the heroes of peace and victory, of one of whom, as a native of the place, they were justly proud; and toward the other they felt a devotion for his great personal merits as well as in consequence of his approving attitude to their social family. The Major had provided a feast worthy of the occasion, and the guests brought with them of welcome to those who had been so long absent. The period of supper was

interspersed with pleasant conversation, and occasional invitations from the host to taste the dainty viands, and when these were removed, the worthy Major, without further prelude, rose and addressed his visitors in the following words:

"MY DEAR FRIENDS:—Nearly two centuries have elapsed since my ancestors, driven from the land of their nativity by religious intolerance, sought, on this mighty continent, refuge from a persecution at which their hearts revolted. They patiently and with submission endured the deprivations common to a wild and houseless country, for they and their associates were upheld by the sustaining hope that they might shield their children from the pollution of their age, and lead them through life's pilgrimage under the influence of those illustrious but simple precepts, the grandeur and vital truth of which have been immixed in the teachings of posterity for upward of eighteen centuries. They were stern in their habits, severe in their deportment, inflexible in their faith, and sincere and just in their intercourse with mankind. An inherent love of liberty prevailed among them, and they would allow no innovation upon those rights which they had purchased so dearly. These feelings were nourished by succeeding generations, and in the 'old French war' of 1753, our name stands enrolled among the defenders of the country. In that glorious war of enfranchisement, which commenced in 1776, when that mercurial mother, who had spawned a peevish and intractable son from her arm, claimed our inheritance upon our advancing to youth, I, with many of my friends around me, entered the army; nor did we retire from that honorable service, until our country was the property of its people. Three years since, an infamous attempt was made by that maternal mother to overturn the victories of a Washington; but thirty years of independence, though spent in peace, had not lessened the vigor of our people; and thus, in 1815, without the powerful sword, the warrior genius, or the marble name of the hero of independence—without the experienced counsel of those giant statesmen who then guided the national affairs, we have established the renown and innate bravery of the nation by our offensive naval conquests and military triumphs; and I thank God, in the gratitude of my heart, that my family and our community have been able to

contribute some assistance to the necessities of our country. I wish to explain that nearly forty years after the arrival of my direct ancestry, another branch of the family tree joined the former immigrants on this hallowed soil, on the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne of England. These descendants had fought at Edgehill, at Marston Moor, and Naseby, and when the juicy fruits of those great battles were carelessly abandoned to monarchy by the infatuated people, those of my kindred quitted the country. 'There,' continued the Major, with great emotion, and pointing to a collection of arms affixed to the side of the room, 'there are the arms and armor in which they fought against monarchical aggression. I cherish those emblems with a sacred reverence. I have placed beside them those arms used by my family in the 'old French war,' in defeat of a greedy spirit of conquest; and I have presumed to associate with them, not in the feeling of arrogance, but as an historical record, the arms which I had the honor to bear through the great war of Independence. To these I have added a more recent family relic, which I regard with satisfaction and pride—it is the arms borne by my son when he performed those gallant acts which have led to his promotion.'

The Major reseated himself amid the exultation of his friends. All eyes were directed to the examination of the ancient and modern missiles of war which had been so successfully used in the cause of liberty by one family on both sides the vast Atlantic. There, in high relief upon the wall, appeared the sword and pistols carried at the battle of Edgehill, in 1642—the armor and morion of a scion of the family who formed one of the invincible Ironsides at the valiant field of Marston Moor, in 1644—and the arms borne through that fearful day at Naseby, in 1645—and around these were displayed, as if encircling the embryo of a system of popular government, afterward so elaborately unfolded in this most favored country—the hostile weapons wielded by this dauntless race in nearly twenty years of warfare on the soil of their adopted country—in 1756-63, in 1774-83, and in 1812-15—in which the people of this mighty country prepared for, sustained, and maintained the freedom and the independence which they now enjoy.

The visitors, who had listened to the Major with admiration,

and had regarded the military symbols with curiosity and pleasure, now reverted to the great national advantages which had been rendered by this family. The Lieutenant and his lovely Laura were at this moment gazing from a window upon the lawn, when the former said :

"The military history of your family, my dearest love, is one of great renown; but who among its heroes has secured to his memory such fame as your dear father. Behold this park, your substantial farm-houses, and the thousands of acres in this lovely valley exalted from useless impotence to luxuriant fields, and all by his directing hand and energy. Then let us look around this room, and observe the wealthy colony of happy hearts, once little less rugged than the savage wilderness by which they were surrounded, but now won to gentleness and philanthropy by the teachings of one good master. Our father, dearest Laura—for you will not refuse me the delight thus prematurely to conjoin my name with his—is of that rare and deep impressive character which enthralls all hearts, and he has used his power for great and worthy purposes."

The evening, however, was not allowed to disappear in reflections and retrospective glances. The new Major commenced the dance, and so merrily did the night recede, that no one sought a record of the time, nor was a departure contemplated until the young Major, the Lieutenant, and Sinclair had danced with almost every belle in the room, when certain symptoms appeared in the east, which reluctantly separated the party.

Now followed a period of happy enjoyment to the devoted lovers—the sweet carols of the birds, the luster of the sun, the brightness of the verdure on tree and meadow, gave sanctity and cheer to hearts fashioned for each other. They gambled in delight by the torrent's roar, along the rapid and impetuous waters of the brook, through the subtle shades of the dense forest, and across the grassy landscape of the glen, where bounding flocks and lowing herds cropped the luxuriant herbage. The Major and his amiable wife rejoyced youth amidst so much family happiness, and even the young Major declared one day to the Lieutenant that being in the vicinage of so much worship at the shrine of Cupid, he was imbued

with all the premonitory symptoms of love without having yet an object upon whom to bestow these incipient feelings.

The felicity of the Lieutenant was unalloyed, but he had yet to reach the seventh heaven. He had received the frank and cordial approbation of his father to his marriage with Laura, and after some persuasion and discussion it was arranged that the marriage of the sisters should take place on the same day, which gave the utmost satisfaction to both the **Lieutenant and Captain Sinclair.**

Two months had yet to elapse ere that magic day would arrive—a weary probation to walk the earth in single loneliness; but the decree was inexorable. The young Major claimed some of their assistance in his hunting excursions, which, with walks and rides with the ladies, brought that apparently endless period to a termination. A clergyman from a distant part had courteously assented to attend and perform the ceremony, and arrived the previous day. The church had been tastefully decorated, and the whole village awaited the event with much eagerness.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE SISTERS.

ON the morning of the wedding, the villagers repaired to the house of the Major. Twenty-four of the young ladies had previously been appointed bridesmaids—twelve to each bride; and the bridegrooms were attended by an equal number of gallants. The clergyman had preceded them to the church, and, after some delay, the procession followed on foot. First skipped a number of little girls, prettily dressed in white, who strewed flowers before the brides, taken from a fanciful basket which each juvenile nymph carried in her hand. Then came the Major with the elder daughter, elegantly attired, on his arm, who was attended by her bridesmaids, and beside them the young Major and Laura, dressed in a similar style to her sister, and attended also by her bridesmaids; then followed the

bridegrooms, walking side by side, and accompanied by their friends, and the rear was composed of all the inhabitants of the settlement. The church was soon reached, and the whole party proceeded up the aisle, and formed in front of the altar. The sacred vows were pronounced, and before these happy lovers quitted the holy shrine they received the congratulations of the village. The joyous throng returned to the Major's, where a sumptuous *déjeuné* was provided. The bridal cakes, which were of great dimensions, and were placed on the table on silver salvers, were carved by the younger Major with the sword of the oldest warrior of the family, as it was the desire of the Major that the sword which was first drawn in the cause of liberty by one of his race should be used on this momentous occasion by the soldier who struck the last blow for that exalted boon. Thus the nuptial cakes acquired an increased charm, especially in the estimation of the ladies, from the ancient historical character of the weapon used in their division, and each fair one was awarded a portion in the hope that some potent influence might be effected by the agency of such a cabalistic talisman.

The Major and his wife, although their hearts were so affectionately entwined with those of their dear children, would not allow themselves to repine at the desolating change about to take place in their household, but when their good friends, in the gratitude of their feelings, proposed health and happiness to the host and his lady, he became evidently affected, and replied that he was more than satisfied at the events of the morning, for it contributed to the comfort and protection of two so dear to him. "But it is a satisfaction to these children," continued the Major, "which will cheer and support them at the hour of parting, that they leave their parents with such associates—among devoted friends, with whom I have shared the danger of the battle-field and the difficulties and hardships of colonization, and who have ever proved unshaken in their faith and attachment. Let us continue to do justice to each other, and happiness will never be asked in vain of that Power who loves to bestow it where it can be worthily granted."

A few weeks after the marriage, Captain and Mrs Sinclair left for England, on a visit to the Captain's friends, and the

Lieutenant also departed for his father's residence, who was most anxious to be introduced to the wife of his son. They consequently traveled together through the woods. The whole colony deplored the loss of such amiable friends; but the hunter, who from his late associations, had been almost weaned from his wild pursuits, displayed, in his quietude of manner, a feeling of deep sorrow. He accompanied them beyond the forest, and on the route he endeavored, by every attention, to soothe the anguish which oppressed these indigent plants of the wilderness at being transplanted from their woodland scenery.

On their arrival at Buffalo, the sisters, now entering upon the vicissitudes of life, had to take leave of each other, as the Sinclairs were now to pursue a different course. The parting was severely felt by both, but each had now a husband by whom her sorrows were soothed and alleviated. The Lieutenant pressed the hunter to continue the journey with them to his father's, that he might be introduced to the preserver of his son, but he could not prevail. He replied that he would return to the Torrents with the intelligence of their safe conduct through the forest, and when Laura heard this, she regarded the hunter so thankfully and the Lieutenant so beseechingly, that the latter said no more upon the subject. They separated with every feeling of regret—few words were spoken, but those came from the heart and went to the feelings.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

IN after times, when this devoted family had resumed their former places at the Torrents, and many little tongues called the white-haired Major "grandpapa," the elder son of Laura, a fine intelligent boy of ten years old, stood beside the hunter playing with his rifle, and telling him that he was named Duncan after him, and that his papa and mamma had ever taught him to love the hunter, for that he had twice preserved

his papa's life. The hunter felt this homage to his honor, and traced in the instruction of their son the dignity and sweetness of this loving couple. Duncan had the dauntless spirit of his father, and the affectionate disposition of his mother. He and the hunter became inseparable, and the Lieutenant, who had now become a Captain, and who had inherited considerably wealth from his father, was delighted that the principles of respect and gratitude which he had endeavored to implant in his son's mind toward the hunter were already producing fruits. Both he and Laura exulted at the meshes of affection which the little Duncan was winding around the heart of the hunter, in the hope that it might entice him to their home.

Captain Sinclair, who, on his arrival in England, was dissuaded from retiring from the army, was now become a Colonel, and his regiment was at this period quartered in Canada. Mary was now the happy mother of three children, all of whom she had brought to the place of her early joys.

The younger Major had married a lady of most amiable disposition, and they resided with their venerable parents, to whom his wife was an affectionate daughter.

Two only of the worthy colonists had died in the absence of the sisters, and no sooner did the survivors hear of their arrival, than they rushed to the house of the Major to see again their dear old friends.

A decade of years had passed away before this happy family had again assembled at the residence of their venerated father; but their affection for each other was unviolated. Additional claims had been made upon their hearts; but the loving feelings of the wife and the mother had not supplanted those of the daughter and the sister. They gratefully fostered those pure and spotless principles in thought and conduct in which they had been tutored, and from which they not only traced the foundation of the happiness they now enjoyed, but felt their ability to instill into the tender minds of their own children the golden precepts taught them by their incomparable parents.

The Major and his wife thus saw their exemplary virtues reflected in the persons of two generations. He viewed his beloved country restored to a tranquillity which had endured

and was likely to continue. He beheld this peace bringing wealth to her coffers, commerce to her shores, happiness to her people, and population to her endless lands; and he had before him the pleasing and indubitable assurance in the marriage of his elder daughter, that a Union of the Stars and Stripes with the British Lion was not incompatible with the most perfect amity, felicity and love.

"My dear sons," said the philanthropic Major, one day, in conversation with the Captain, the Colonel and the Major, "the victories of Lake Erie and of Lake Champlain, and our conquests on the sea and our triumphs by land, will ever live in history; but may the generosity of the American people be ready to attribute the audacity which led to these engagements more to the monarchy of the time, than to the noble people of whom we are the descendants, and from whose mighty and deeply-rooted tree of Liberty we obtained our branches."

In one deep voice of assent, the brotherly trio exclaimed—
"Amen! amen!"

THE END.

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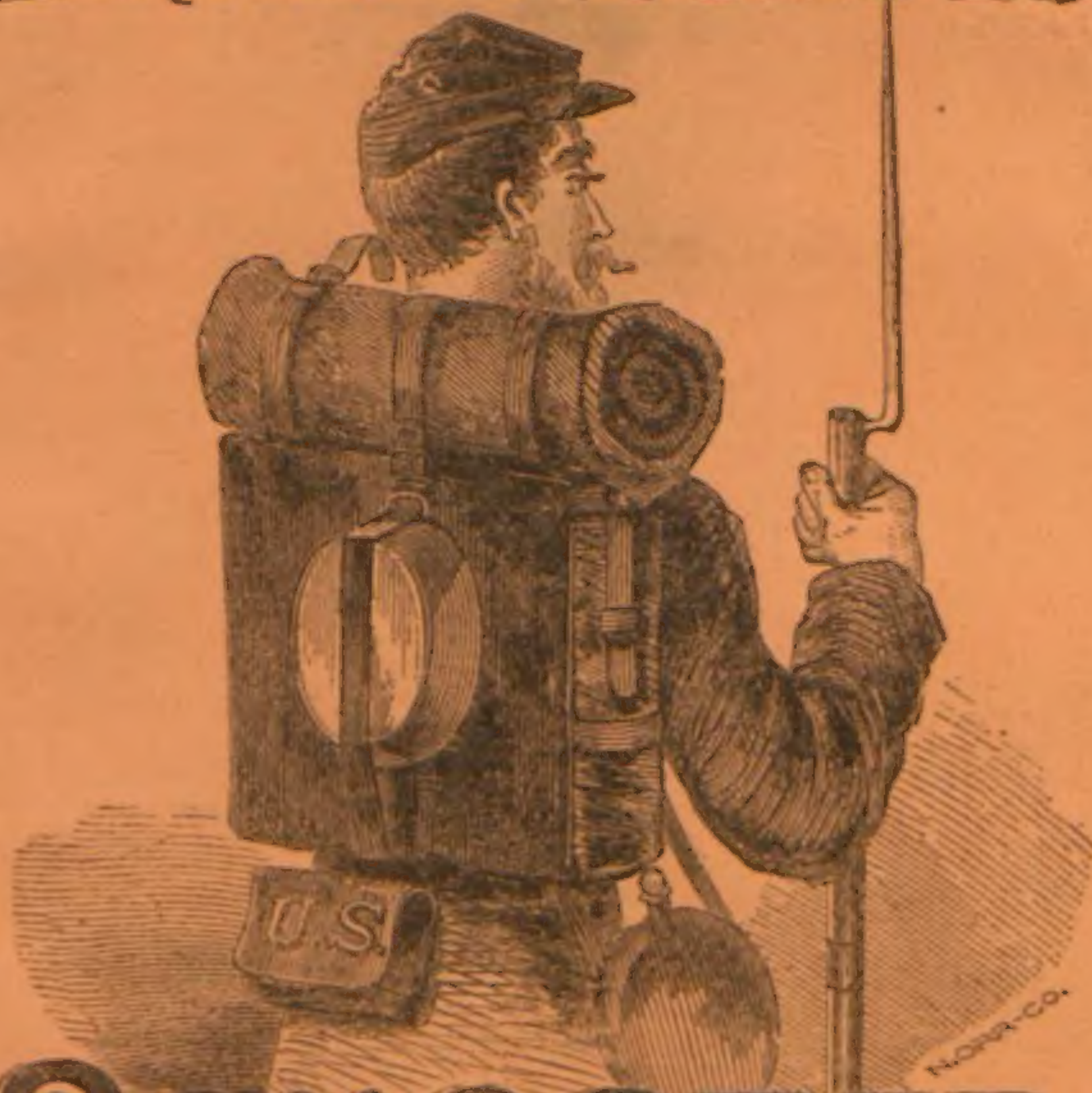
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